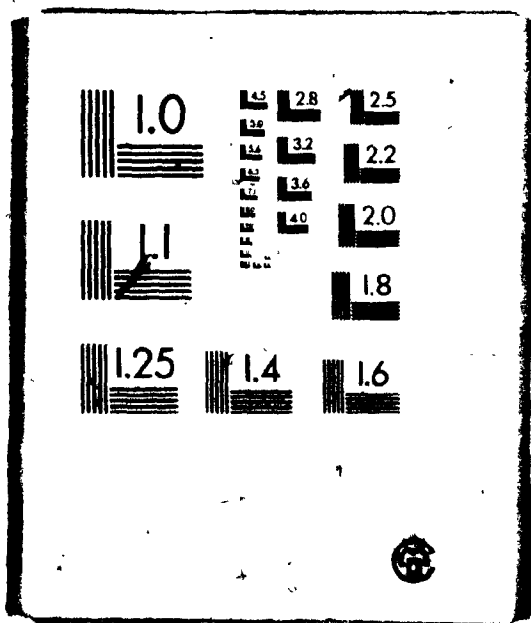


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AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN GENERAL DUMOURIEZ AND THE "GIRONDINS",
MARCH, 1792-APRIL, 1793.

by



WENDELL WEIR CARROTHERS, B.A. (Hons.)

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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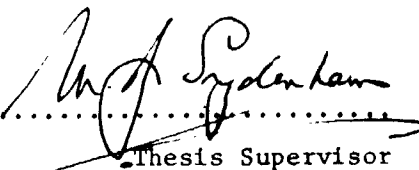
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in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts


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Abstract

In April, 1793, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the North, General C.F. Dumouriez, first attempted to lead his army against Paris, and then defected to the Austrian lines. It was alleged at the time that he had acted in concert with those deputies of the National Convention who are commonly called the Girondins, and with whom he was said to have had a close relationship previously, particularly in the formation and policy of the so-called Patriot Ministry early in 1792. This view is still widely accepted, having the support of such noted modern historians as Lefebvre, Rudé and J.M. Thompson. It is also supported in various monographs, such as those of R.M. Brace and R. Brouillard.

The present inquiry was initially based on the assumption that this interpretation was valid and that further light might be cast upon it by an examination of the part played by Jean-Paul Marat in exposing Dumouriez's treasonable intentions. Examination of the situation in 1792-1793, however, compelled the author to question the validity of the supposed association itself. This arose as a result of the fact that the origin of the charge of an association was easily enough found, but the substance of an association was not to be found.

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INTRODUCTION

On the morning of April 4th, 1793, the Commander-in-Chief of the French Army of the North, General Dumouriez, left his camp at the baths of Saint-Amand to ride to Condé. He had heard that the military and civilian inhabitants of this fortress were in a state of great anxiety on the question of his pending march against the National Convention and he hoped by a personal appearance to win their support for his cause. About a league from Condé Dumouriez and his état-major, including the Duke of Chartres, the future Louis-Philippe, encountered a battalion of volunteers en route for Valenciennes and under the command of Davout, the future Marshal of the Empire. "Where are you going?", asked Dumouriez, "To Valenciennes", was the reply. "No, you are going to Condé," said Dumouriez as he separated himself from their midst to write a formal order to that effect. The volunteers grew restless, menacing; the soldiers had heard of the Convention's decree ordering his arrest. Shouts rang out: "Arrête, arrête, à bas les traîtres!"; shots were fired and, led by Davout's call to "save the Republic", the volunteers ran towards Dumouriez. The general scrambled onto his horse and galloped to the Austrian lines with the mounted volunteers in hot pursuit. Four of his party were killed and one captured.¹

1. A. Chuquet, Dumouriez (Paris, 1914), pp. 217-219.

Unfortunately for writers in search of the dramatic, Dumouriez returned the next morning and, on finding he had lost the support of much of his army, turned and rode unharassed back to the Austrian camp. On this anticlimatic note the French military and political career of General Dumouriez came to an end and an almost thirty year exile began.²

History has best remembered Dumouriez for his counter-revolutionary activities during late March and early April of 1793, a state of affairs decried by his two most important biographers, J. Holland Rose and Arthur Chuquet. Yet History may be forgiven for this spotlight on the general's treason (and technically he was guilty of treason) as by his action and by his failure, Dumouriez invoked passions that must invariably turn on the writer's interpretation of the French Revolution. If Dumouriez has received an, on balance, hostile historiography, this might, then, say rather more about historians' interpretations of the Revolution than it does about their interpretation of Dumouriez's role in the Revolution. As only one historian in the survey about to be conducted wrote flatly in support of Dumouriez's plot, it would be instructive to see how

2. Ibid., pp. 222-223. Dumouriez died in England in 1823.

historians have interpreted Dumouriez's political career and associations during 1792 and 1793.

Mignet and Thiers, who wrote their respective histories of the Revolution during the Restoration, were the first major historians to devote a significant amount of attention to Dumouriez. Both men argued that Dumouriez was bereft of political conviction and rejected the claim made in Dumouriez's then recently published memoirs that he had been a supporter of the Bourbons.³ In early spring of 1793, they argued, Dumouriez was an Orleanist.⁴ While the two historians considered the general's flight to the Austrians to have accelerated the downfall of the "girondins", neither felt Dumouriez to have been associated with them since the collapse of the Patriot Ministry.⁵ On the question of the appointment of the Ministry, Mignet asserted that the "girondins" had been responsible for Dumouriez's nomination but Thiers maintained that Dumouriez had sufficient royalist support to obtain a post regardless of "girondin" opinion.⁶

3. M.A. Thiers, Histoire de la Révolution française (8 vols.: Paris, 1854), 11, 56. M. Mignet, Histoire de la Révolution française (Paris, 1886), pp. 237-238. Dumouriez's memoirs were published in 1822.

4. Thiers, IV, 15. Mignet, p. 372.

5. Thiers, II, 60, 80-81; 111, 68, 78; IV, 42. Mignet, p. 249.

6. Mignet, p. 237. Thiers, 11, 56-60.

4

In any event, Mignet and Thiers were adamant that any association that might have obtained was broken by the end of the Ministry and was never reconciled thereafter.

As dissatisfaction with Louis-Philippe's reign grew, it was not surprising that historians should become more critical of Dumouriez, the king's former military associate. Like Mignet and Thiers, Michelet, Lamartine and Michaud considered Dumouriez to have been without political conviction but, at the time of his flight, to have espoused Orleanism as an avenue for his ambition.⁷ Louis Blanc did not address the issue of Orleanism but did amplify Mignet's contention that "the Gironde" had raised Dumouriez to the Ministry: "l'impérieuse Gironde lui (Louis XVI), imposa comme ministre des affaires étrangères Dumouriez, qui avait Gensonné pour ami et Brissot pour prôneur".⁸ Nonetheless, said Blanc, the association was short-lived and was not renewed.⁹ Lamartine and Michaud saw Dumouriez as an Orleanist since Valmy but, argued

7. J. Michelet, Histoire de la Révolution française (9 vols.: Paris, 1849), 111, 373; V, 316, 398-299. A. Lamartine, Histoire des Girondins (5 vols. : Paris, 1881), IV, 101-102, 105-106, 109-110, 133. L.G. Michaud, Vie publique et privée de Louis-Philippe d'Orléans (Paris, 1849), pp. 54-64.

8. Louis Blanc, Histoire de la Révolution française (10 vols.: Paris, 1854), VI, 296-297.

9. Ibid., pp. 368-371.

Lamartine, Dumouriez tried to work with the "Girondins" in January to save Louis from the scaffold only to find them too irresolute to help.¹⁰

Michelet was highly critical of Dumouriez and, to the extent that he considered the general to be political, claimed he was Orleanist in the spring of 1793.¹¹ However, Michelet was far more interested in Dumouriez's association with the "girondins" than his predecessors had been. He did not interpret the collapse of the Patriot Ministry as a definitive break in their association for, publicly, the "girondins" were forced to support Dumouriez as "l'homme necessaire, le général unique".¹² This public, though not private, association, said Michelet, placed responsibility for Dumouriez's actions on the "girondins" who, by failing to act decisively in the crisis, added further to Jacobin charges of complicity.¹³

Quinet, writing in exile under the Second Empire, interpreted Dumouriez as having been a self-serving general who was responsible for a great deal of grief: "he saved himself; but he lost Custine, Biron, Houchard, Beauharnais

10. Michaud, p. 54. Lamartine, IV, 101-102, 108.

11. Michelet, III, 373; V, 398-399.

12. Ibid., V, 331.

13. Ibid., IV, 220, 360; V, 312-313, 321-322.

and so many others. Above all he lost the girondins, guilty of having believed for a moment in his fidelity".¹⁴ Beyond a circumstantial association, that of having served in the same Ministry as three "girondins" Dumouriez was not associated with the "girondins".¹⁵

Albert Sorel, writing at the end of the nineteenth century, was far more exhaustive in his study of Dumouriez than any of the previously-noted historians. The result of his research placed him squarely in the tradition of Thiers, save the Orleans issue, and Quinet: Dumouriez was an ambitious, politically unscrupulous individual who used anyone or any group to further his own ends. "Dumouriez finished as he began," concluded Sorel, "a nomadic adventurer".¹⁶ Apart from his addiction for adventure, Sorel argued that the general did not understand his times, the mood of the French or the Revolution and this, more than anything else, was the cause of Dumouriez's downfall.¹⁷

14. Edgar Quinet, La Révolution (2 vols.: Paris, 1869), I, 456.

15. Ibid., pp. 312-317.

16. Albert Sorel, L'Europe et la Révolution française (8 vols.: Paris, 1913), II, 403-408.

17. Ibid., II, 423; III, 336, 360. Sorel noted that there had been the appearance of Dumouriez--"Girondin" association but that it had not existed. Ibid., III, 411.

Thus, one would conclude on the basis of this survey¹⁸ that Dumouriez was largely apolitical. Only Lamartine and Michaud, both highly suspect historians,¹⁹ had made any case that Dumouriez did have political convictions. Michelet had addressed the Jacobin charges of 1793 that Dumouriez was associated with the "girondins" and had concluded that their public support gave the appearance of such an association but that, in reality, no such association existed beyond the Ministry. Opinion among all these historians was universal, Dumouriez was not a leading political figure nor had he subscribed to any political faction for any great period of time.

18. It is, unfortunately, not a complete one. An effort was made by the writer to obtain the following books which, had they arrived in time, might have altered the conclusions drawn concerning nineteenth century historians and Dumouriez. The books and articles are: Ledieu, Le général Dumouriez et la Révolution française (Paris, n.d.); A. Maurin, Biographe de Dumouriez (Paris, 1848); A. Montchanin, Dumouriez (Paris, 1884); A. Sorel, "La Defection de Dumouriez", Revue des Deux Mondes, (August, 1884); A. Sorel; "Dumouriez: un général diplomate au temps de la Révolution", Revue des Deux Mondes, (August, 1884).

19. For Lamartine, see: M.J. Sydenham, The Girondins (Westport, Ct., 1976); pp. 5-7. Michaud's history was a highly unfavorable account of the life of the recently dethroned Louis-Philippe.

This interpretation was challenged in the twentieth century. Kropotkin began this process by introducing Dumouriez to his readers as "the Girondist General (who) was already (in late 1791) plotting with the king" to check the progress of the Revolution.²⁰ By October, 1792, claimed Kropotkin, Dumouriez had abandoned the Bourbons in favour of Orléans and in January, 1793, "was closely connected with the Girondins".²¹ This connection lasted through the spring, as proved by the support given Dumouriez "in the Girondin press" by "the journalist friends of Dumouriez".²² Kropotkin implied but did not state that the "Girondins" were implicated in Dumouriez's insurrection.

Chuquet and Holland Rose wrote their biographies of Dumouriez within a decade of each other. Holland Rose viewed Dumouriez as a man far superior to the Revolution in general and the criminal Jacobins in particular. Announcing that "the time of heroics about the French

20. Peter Kropotkin, The Great French Revolution (New York, 1971), p. 236.

21. Ibid., pp. 326, 381.

22. Ibid., p. 384.

Revolution is past" and that "the rhapsodist, Michelet, has given place to the analyst, Taine",²³ Holland Rose excused the "technical treason" on the following grounds: "to lead an army against such a Government (the Convention) can scarcely be styled a treasonable act...What armed force has made, armed force can unmake".²⁴ Dumouriez, asserted Holland Rose, was, throughout, a loyal supporter of the Bourbon monarchy and had sought to enlist the support of the "Girondins" in October and January to that cause only to be repulsed by them.²⁵ Chuquet did not echo Holland Rose's exercise in hagiography but was, nonetheless, highly sympathetic to his subject. Dumouriez wanted order, asserted Chuquet, and saw himself flummoxed at every turn by the ill-advised decrees of the Convention: Totally exasperated, he turned to the expedient of a Bourbon restoration.²⁶ Like Holland Rose, Chuquet viewed the "girondins" as having missed Dumouriez's superior vision of the Revolution: "il jugeait que la direction de la Révolution leur échappait" and so broke with them during

23. J. Holland Rose and A.M. Boradley, Dumouriez and the Defence of England Against Napoleon (London, 1908) p. 485.

24. Ibid., p. 482

25. Ibid., pp. 132-133, 154.

26. Chuquet, pp. 164-165, 181-182.

the Patriot Ministry.²⁷

Louis Madelin and Georges Lefebvre did not interpret Dumouriez's career as favourably as his biographers had and challenged their views on his association with the "girondins". Madelin frankly considered that Dumouriez owed his ministerial appointment and subsequent military rise to the "Girondins".²⁸ The insurrection was Dumouriez's alone but as "close associates" and "friends" of Dumouriez and having "accepted the policy of conquest" "on his account", the "Girondins" were "overwhelmed and ruined" by his "treachery".²⁹ Lefebvre's interpretation of Dumouriez during the Ministry was that he used the "Girondins" to gain power then broke with them for his goal was "to conduct a brief war, then use his victorious army to restore royal power and govern in the king's name."³⁰ Having said that and nothing further on a Dumouriez-"Girondin" association, Lefebvre asserted that the general's "treason" had "compromised" the "Girondins" because of "their close

27. Chuquet, pp. 91, 137.

28. Louis Madelin, The French Revolution (London, 1933), p. 333.

29. Ibid., pp. 315, 328, 333.

30. Georges Lefebvre, The French Revolution (2 vols., New York, 1964), I, 225.

connection with him". "Nor can it be doubted", continued Lefebvre, "that those who exploited his name would have applauded the success of his coup d'état".³¹

J.M. Thompson, Albert Goodwin and George Rude' presented Dumouriez essentially as his own man but felt obliged to speak of an association with the "Girondins". Thompson considered the general "a party leader...who turned against his own friends";³² Goodwin concluded that Dumouriez was not a "Girondin" although he "had been so closely identified with Girondin policy both as a minister and as a general that his former political associates in the Convention found it difficult to repudiate the charge of complicity in his treason".³³ For Rude', Dumouriez was a man of the "Brisſotin connexion" who gained his ministerial post because of that connection. No further mention of this connection was made until the narrative of Dumouriez's "treason" when Rude' stated that "as close associates of the general" the "Girondins" were more

31. Georges Lefebvre, The French Revolution (2 vols., New York, 1964), II, 48.

32. J.M. Thompson, Leaders of the French Revolution (New York, 1968), p. 264.

33. Albert Goodwin, The French Revolution (New York, 1965), pp. 118-119, 150.

exposed to recriminations than were the Jacobins.³⁴

However the most exhaustive and specialized study of Dumouriez in this survey of twentieth-century historians was undertaken in the early 1950's by R.M. Brace. As the title of the resultant article suggests, "General Dumouriez and the Girondins 1792-1793", Brace concluded that there was an association between the two.

Between Dumouriez and the Girondin leaders there had been a liaison of some duration which on occasion was troubled and uncertain. The basis of this alignment was self-interest on both sides, and its strains had come at periods when interests could not be reconciled.³⁵

Tracing this liaison through 1792 and 1793 Brace conjectured that "there were Girondins who wanted to turn the clock back to the constitution of 1791" who, if not involved in the "Dumouriez plot", might have supported it.³⁶ In any event, as "the Girondins...had so completely linked their future with that of Dumouriez", they were "the logical recipients of accusations ranging from treason and royalism to blind stupidity".³⁷ As they were unable to respond to these charges, the "treason" contributed to the consolidation of

34. George Rudé, Revolutionary Europe 1783-1815 (London, 1971), pp. 129, 135.

35. R.M. Brace, "General Dumouriez and the Girondins 1792-1793", American Historical Review, LVI, No. 3 (April, 1951), 493.

36. Ibid., 509.

37. Ibid., 504, 508.

the formidable opposition to the Girondin leadership" and "shortened the Girondins' time, which was already running out".³⁸

The reader can appreciate the evident contradiction between the historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Was Dumouriez an Orleanist, "Girondin" or opportunist? As this question warrants investigation so too does it warrant sharper definition. The thesis of Orleanism has not received serious attention since Michaud's work in 1849 and for two reasons: the Bourbon-Orléans debate was one that corresponded to political disputes during the Restoration and July Monarchy years and was given life because of that debate; secondly, the thesis is based on an "if", as Thiers pointed out: if Dumouriez had succeeded he would have placed Chartres on the throne. As Dumouriez did not succeed, it would be fruitless to pursue an unanswerable question. The opportunist thesis has received consistent, if at times qualified, support, while the "Girondin" one is wholly twentieth century, rendering them both worthy of investigation.

38. R.M. Brace, "General Dumouriez and the Girondins 1791-1793", American Historical Review, LVI, No. 3 (April 1951), 509.

It is the purpose of this thesis, therefore, to examine the relationship between General Dumouriez and the "Girondins" during the period from March, 1792, to April, 1793. This examination may contribute to the resolution of the controversy surrounding Dumouriez's political sympathies. However, inextricably involved here is a much larger controversy, that of the existence, or non-existence, of the "Girondin party". For reasons of clarity, the use of "Girondin" in the title of this thesis is imperative, but the writer's investigation has confirmed the view that no such party existed. As a consequence, the term "Brissotin" is used throughout; the term implying a consensus among Brissot, Vergniaud, Guadet and Gensonné. Any other individuals referred to as supporters, on particular issues, will be so interpreted on the basis of Dr. Sydenham's conclusions in The Girondins.³⁹

39. Sydenham, pp. 228-229.

CHAPTER I

Dumouriez and the Patriot Ministry

The Patriot Ministry was formed while France was on the verge of a momentous undertaking: war. Since the fall of 1791 the war fever had been growing steadily catching royalist, Feuillant and Jacobin opinion in its rise and reducing opposing voices to isolation. Each segment of the political spectrum felt that a war could be used for its advantage: the royalists saw war as a means of counter-revolution; the Feuillants as a means of halting the revolutionary tide and restoring conservatism; the Jacobins as a means of forcing Louis XVI to decide for or against the Revolution and of rallying the nation. With pressure steadily mounting, war approached apace.¹

There were, however, some obstacles to surmount. Austria was not anxious for war nor were some of the king's advisors, notably Barnave, the Lameths and more importantly Delessart, the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The solution to these problems, as seen by Brissot and the Jacobins,²

1. This narrative on the march to war was culled from Goodwin, pp. 116-118; Rude, pp. 126-129; and M.J. Sydenham, The French Revolution (New York, 1966), pp. 90-94.

2. On the war question Brissot, a member of the Jacobin Society at this time, was far more representative of Jacobin opinion in general than was Robespierre. In fact, it would be exceedingly difficult to distinguish between Jacobins and "Girondins" in the spring of 1792. The Patriot Ministry, said Lefebvre, "was the germ of the mortal duel between Mountain and Gironde". Lefebvre, I, 225.

was to exert pressure on Louis to adopt a much more bellicose attitude towards Austria. This they did by repeatedly criticising the king and his ministers in the Legislative Assembly and by denouncing the "Austrian Committee" as a counter-revolutionary body at Court.

Circumstances favoured the apparently all-encompassing war party. In early March Emperor Leopold II of Austria died, elevating the more war-inclined Francis II to the throne and, in Paris, Louis was ill-advised enough to precipitate a crisis by dismissing Narbonne, the Minister of War.³ Spurred on by this dismissal the Jacobins called Delessart⁴ to the bar of the Assembly to account for his diplomatic activities with Austria and, outraged to learn that he had been working to avoid war by ignoring Austrian communications hostile and insulting to the nation, the constitution and the Revolution, he was impeached. Fearing a similar fate all but one of the

3. Louis, Count of Narbonne-Lara was named to the War Ministry on December 6, 1791 perhaps due to the influence of his mistress Madame de Staël. Louis found him intolerable but he enjoyed some popularity with the Jacobins. Brace, p. 493.

4. Antoine de Valdec de Lessart served under Necker in 1789-1790 and then held the Finance post himself in 1790. The following year he moved to the Interior until being appointed November 30th, 1791 to Foreign Affairs. He was imprisoned as a result of this impeachment and killed during the September Massacres. One source, Masson's Le Département des affaires étrangères, claims that Brissot's attack on Delessart was based on notes furnished by Dumouriez. Cited in Eloise Ellery, Brissot de Warville (Boston, 1915), p. 146.

ministers resigned.

In this situation the king had but two choices: defy the Assembly and appoint Feuillant ministers or accede to the Assembly and appoint ministers acceptable to it. Louis took the second course and, as was customary, gave De Grave, the sole remaining minister, the task of suggesting individuals to him. Having only served for ten days De Grave did not feel confident in this undertaking and so turned to the Brissotins for advice.⁵ The first name suggested to De Grave was Dumouriez, followed by Roland, Clavière and Duranthon. On entering the Ministry Dumouriez named Lacoste to the last vacant post.

Dumouriez was qualified for a ministerial post. Having entered the Seven Years War at the age of nineteen he distinguished himself sufficiently to end the war a captain with twenty-two wounds and the cross of Saint-Louis. Without a war Dumouriez was effectively unemployed with an army pension of 600 livres a year. By virtue of ability, friends and acquaintances, Dumouriez managed to acquire various military, political and diplomatic tasks in Italy, Corsica, Spain, Portugal and Poland. He also served time in the Bastille for incurring Madame du Barry's displeasure.

⁵. Etienne Dumont, Souvenirs sur Mirabeau (Paris 1951), p. 204.

Freed on the occasion of Louis' marriage to Marie Antoinette, he was given the post of commandant of Cherbourg in 1778. Here he remained until the outbreak of the Revolution acquiring a modest reputation for his coastal defence plans and fortifications.⁶

In 1789 Dumouriez tried unsuccessfully for election to the Estates General and then accepted a political mission to Belgium offered by Lafayette. On completing this he was given a military posting in the Vendée until his recall to Paris in early 1792. Ostensibly Dumouriez was to assist Delessart in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but, as Delessart cared not for his counsels, Narbonne employed him in the War Department. Thus, when this Ministry fell, Dumouriez was in Paris and on the periphery of the storm.⁷

During the three year period of the Revolution to 1792, Dumouriez's political opinions were forming. He had welcomed the calling of the Estates General as a necessary remedy to the ills of the Court. He felt the

6. Lengthy accounts of Dumouriez's early life may be found in Chuquet, chapters I - IV; and Holland Rose, chapters I - II.

7. Chuquet, chapter V; Holland Rose, chapter IV.

Court had been frivolous and, particularly due to the quarrels of Artois and Marie-Antoinette, a house divided against itself. However, Versailles was not the place to impress the people with the Court's desire for reform nor was Paris a suitable location and so he urged that deliberations be held away from the passions of both. Voting should be by head not order and he thought the Rights of Man was not only premature but a mistake for it encouraged disorder without offering any means of countering it. A constitution and a legal code should, he said, have been enacted first as they would have provided a clear statement of the citizen's duties at a time when this statement was most needed. Nonetheless, Dumouriez accepted the, he thought, belated Constitution of 1791, "sublime, quoique imparfaite", and vowed to serve the King, Constitution and nation.⁸

If these views were not revolutionary, neither were they counter-revolutionary and when qualified by Dumouriez's rank they express an extraordinary degree of acceptance for a Revolution that was daily driving more

8. General C.F. Dumouriez, La Vie et les Mémoires du Général Dumouriez, eds. Berville and Barrière (4 vols.: Paris, 1822), II, 1-130; III, p. 331.

senior officers to emigrate.⁹ They also show Dumouriez to have followed political events as opposed to anticipating them: Dumouriez was not a political theorist. However, because of the general's expression of support for the monarchy and evident desire for order, one could legitimately suspect, in March, 1792, that Dumouriez might well be disposed to brook no further infringements of the king's rights and prerogatives. To say the least Dumouriez was very much an unknown quantity on entering the Ministry. Only by his actions in office would his politics be clarified.

In the survey of historians undertaken in the Introduction of this thesis, it was discovered that a significant number were of the opinion that the "Girondins" had placed Dumouriez in the Ministry. Furthermore, in speaking of an association with the "Girondins", these historians have placed a great deal of weight on this appointment as the high point in their association as well as being the most explicit example of it.¹⁰ Therefore, it is imperative that the circumstances of this appointment be examined to test the validity of such an opinion.

9. Sydenham, The French Revolution, pp. 89-90

10. Most notably: Chuquet, p. 69; Goodwin, p. 118; Michelet, 111, 372; Blanc, VI, 296-297; Thompson, p. 256; Rude, p. 129.

Dumouriez did have, as we saw in the narrative recounting the appointment, Brissotin support. This support was largely the result of a friendship between Gensonné and the general, a friendship that dated from Dumouriez's military posting in the Vendée in mid 1791. On Gensonné's return, and subsequent election to the Legislative Assembly, he promised Dumouriez to try to obtain an active diplomatic or military posting for him.¹¹ In the fall of 1791 a prolific correspondence started which saw the deputy reporting on the politics of the day and the general providing information on current foreign affairs or military questions.¹² By the end of January, 1791, Gensonné gave Dumouriez some cause to hope that an important post would soon be his: "si, comme j' n'en doute, il y a un mouvement dans le Ministère des Affaires étrangères, vous y serez infailliblement porté malgré le Château".¹³ He

11. R. Brouillard, "Dumouriez et les Girondins correspondance inédite de Gensonné", Revue Historique de Bordeaux et du département de la Gironde, XXXVI, (1943), 37.

12. Six of these lengthy letters written by Gensonné from September 30 to December 26, 1791 are reprinted in Ibid., pp. 37-44.

13. Ibid., p. 45. Gensonné's reference to the Chateau was, to be more specific, a reference to Marie Antoinette who had disapproved of Dumouriez's severe criticisms of émigrés. As well, the Queen was indignant that Dumouriez was living with his mistress. Ibid., p. 45, N. 1.

promised in the same letter to speak to Narbonne on the general's behalf.¹⁴ Immediately prior to the Delessart affair in the Assembly, Gensonné told Dumouriez that "il faudra bien que ces gens-là marchent ou qu'ils quittent, et il est impossible que Lessart tienne".¹⁵ Gensonné, then, was a very active promoter of Dumouriez's interests.

Brissot too desired Dumouriez's appointment. He told Étienne Dumont, a former secretary of Mirabeau's, on March 10th that Delessart's impeachment was imperative as "nous ne pouvons détruire le Cabinet autrichien qu'en mettant un homme sûr dans les relations extérieures".¹⁶

That Dumouriez was this "homme sûr" was made evident in Brissot's Patriote française on March 14th: "les hommes qui veulent de la vigueur, des lumières et du patriotisme, désireraient y voir M. Dumouriez".¹⁷

However, if the general's friendship with Gensonné was the reason Dumouriez had attracted the notice of the Brissotins, it was his foreign policy views that made him suitable. In the previous year Dumouriez had sent a

14. Ibid., p. 45

15. Quoted in Chuquet, p. 69.

16. Dumont, p. 203.

17. Quoted in P.J.B. Buchez and P.C. Roux, Histoire Parlementaire de la Révolution française (43 vols.; Paris, 1834), XIII, p. 402.

memorandum to the Jacobin Society in which he argued for simple and open diplomacy. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, he claimed, should not be a haven for aristocrats but a department directed and served by simple citizens; foreign affairs should be conducted on the basis of the Declaration of the Rights of Man; the Minister should be a patriot of integrity, courage and intelligence; and the Minister should be compelled to communicate all important documents to the Diplomatic Committee.¹⁸ These views were supplemented by the fact that Dumouriez detested Austria and was prepared, if necessary, to go to war;¹⁹ indeed, he considered war inevitable.²⁰ As a minimum, he was not prepared to accept timidly, as Delessart had done, the sabre-rattling communiqués from Vienna.²¹ In Dumouriez the Brissotins had found the Minister they were seeking.

The argument put forth that Dumouriez was a man of the "Brissotin connexion" and had gained his post as a result²² is, therefore, a strong one. It overlooks or at least minimizes one important point. Louis XVI was under

18. The memorandum, titled Mémoire sur le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, is summarized in Holland Rose, pp. 71-71; Chuquet, p. 70.

19. Sorel, 11, 407, 411.

20. Dumouriez, 11, 220.

21. Ibid., 132; Holland Rose, p. 72.

22. Rudé, p. 129

no constitutional obligation to accept as his Minister for Foreign Affairs, or any other portfolio, the individual suggested by the senior Minister in the Executive Council. When De Grave proposed Dumouriez, Louis expressed serious reservations about the choice and resolved to sanction an interim appointment only.²³ In the troubled area of foreign affairs an interim Minister would be in a hopeless situation rendering Louis' decision tantamount to a refusal to accept Dumouriez.

Fortunately, for Dumouriez, he had friends at Court. Since 1786 he had been friends with Vaudreuil, an intimate of the king's brother, Artois,²⁴ and had been dining with the Lameths and Duport in early 1791. Although Dumouriez did not become friendly with these Feuillants, he was astute enough not to alienate them.²⁵ The royalist banker Sainte-Foy was another friend of Dumouriez's²⁶ and, although now out of office and out of royal favour, Narbonne may have been quietly promoting the general's appointment.²⁷ It was, however, his long-standing friendship with La Porte,

23. Dumouriez, 11, 136-138.

24. Ibid., 66.

25. Ibid., 100.

26. Ibid., 66; Chuquet, p. 67.

27. Brace, p. 493.

the Intendant of the Civil List and one of Louis' most devoted followers, which proved to be the most influential.²⁸

Dumouriez tried to convince La Porte that he had entered the Revolution to save the monarchy and although he was not entirely successful,²⁹ La Porte did agree to speak to Louis on Dumouriez's behalf.³⁰ Louis was won over by La Porte's intervention and offered Dumouriez the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs.³¹

Dumouriez's appointment, therefore, was not as straightforward "Girondin" as some historians, such as Rudé, Thompson and Michelet, have suggested. In fact, on the basis of the evidence presented, an argument could be made that Dumouriez's royalist supporters were far more "responsible" for the appointment than the Brissotins had been. However, to attempt to argue on an exclusively Brissotin or royalist basis is to flounder in the "ifs" of History. We can say

28. Dumouriez, 11, 66; Sorel, 11, 407.

29. As evidenced by La Porte's letter to the King on March 19: "un homme de sa trempe peut être, ou fort utile, ou fort dangereux". Cited in Buchez and Roux, XXI, 207.

30. Dumouriez, 11, 138. The intervention is also alluded to in La Porte's letter of March 19th.

31. Of importance here was Sainte-Foy's reaction to the appointment as expressed in a letter to the King a few days later: "Nous sommes sûrs de Dumouriez puisque c'est nous et nous seuls, qui l'avons appelé dans des vues utiles". Cited in Chuquet, p. 70.

at best that Dumouriez had been appointed on the recommendation of both groups and that, if he felt he owed a debt to either, it would be to the royalists who, at least in the person of La Porte, had a promise from him to work on behalf of the monarchy. Nonetheless, it is evident that both the Brissotins and the royalists believed Dumouriez to be a man of their stamp, leaving the impartial observer in the same situation as he/she had been in surveying Dumouriez's political views: Dumouriez's actions in office must be examined to provide some resolution of his political ambivalence.

On March 15, 1792, Dumouriez joined De Grave in the Ministry to be followed, as we have seen, by Roland, Clavière, Duranthon and Lacoste. De Grave had been a Feuillant appointment and, although he was an occasional guest at Madam Roland's salon, there is some evidence that the Brissotins wished for his dismissal.³² It was not to be and, as a well-meaning but weak Minister of War, he very quickly came to rely on Dumouriez's advice and help.³³ Roland and Clavière were decidedly Brissotin appointments and as austere, competent Ministers of the Interior and

32. Dumont, p. 205.

33. Ibid., p. 205; Thompson, p. 258.

Contributions, respectively, they ran their portfolios and expressed their political views without Dumouriez's advice or interference.³⁴ Duranthon was the Minister of Justice and a Brissotin appointment. An obscure lawyer from Bordeaux, he was not influential in the Ministry and came to fall under Dumouriez's sway at Council meetings.³⁵ Lacoste, "a good Jacobin", was in charge of the Ministry of Marine and, to the extent that he became involved in the politics of the Council, tended to side with Dumouriez, the man responsible for his appointment.³⁶

The Patriot Ministry began under favorable circumstances. The Brissotins, the men who had forced Delessart's impeachment and who were among the most vociferous critics of previous Ministries, were wholeheartedly in support of the new one. On March 16, Brissot expressed his optimism in the Patriote française: "j'amiis ministre ne se trouva dans des circonstances aussi favorables au développement de ses talons et de ses vertus civiques".³⁷

34. Dumouriez, I, 372-373.

35. Madelin, p. 235.

36. Ibid., p. 235.

37. Cited in Buchez and Roux, XIII, 402.

The Jacobin Society was jubilant at the news of the Ministry's composition³⁸ and, if Louis never did give the Council his trust, there is no reason to disbelieve that he did not quickly come to appreciate Dumouriez's talents.³⁹

For his part, Dumouriez conducted his portfolio as he had demanded in his pamphlet to the Jacobins the previous year. The Foreign Affairs Department was purged of the more flagrantly counter-revolutionary officials and the top civil service posts were given to patriots, most notably Bonne-Carrière, a former secretary of the Jacobin Society, Noël, a friend of Danton's and Lebrun, a friend of Brissot's.⁴⁰ A bold diplomatic offensive was undertaken with the knowledge and support of the Diplomatic Committee: Talleyrand would be sent to England to bargain for a British alliance or, if that failed, for a declaration of neutrality; Benoît would try to achieve the same in Berlin; Maret would be sent to Belgium to fan the flames of revolution in that Austrian-held country; and Vienna would be called upon to declare its intentions with regard to France.⁴¹ At the

38. F.A. Aulard, La Société des Jacobins: Recueil des Documents (6 vols.; Paris, 1895), 111, 432.

39. Holland Rose, p. 79; Lefebvre, I, 225.

40. Albert Mathiez, The French Revolution (New York, 1962), p. 147.

41. Sorel, II, 412-423. On the Talleyrand mission in particular: G. Pallain, La Mission de Talleyrand à Londres, en 1792 (Paris, 1889).

same time he worked with De Grave on a military strategy in the event of war and this plan was, as it developed later, bold in the extreme. War would be defensive on all frontiers save that of the north which would see a quick offensive into Belgium, aided by the support and turmoil of the Belgians, and, once victorious, an equally prompt peace would be made.⁴²

Louis XVI was apprised of Dumouriez's diplomatic measures and, according to Dumouriez, he approved of them as they reflected a strong monarchy acting decisively in the name of the French people.⁴³ Dumouriez also claimed that he came just short of convincing Marie Antoinette of the sincerity of his actions in the portfolio but as she promptly dispatched his military plans to the Austrians, one would be justified in doubting this contention.⁴⁴

The King was approached on another matter as well. Dumouriez asserted that he had often urged La Porte to counsel the King to espouse Jacobinism to destroy "tous les partis",⁴⁵ and now in office Dumouriez claimed he asked Louis for permission to attend a session of the Society to quiet any suspicions

42. Sorel, II, 410-411.

43. Dumouriez, II, 142-143.

44. Ibid., 164-165; Sydenham, The French Revolution, p. 98.

45. Dumouriez, II, 133.

its members might have regarding the patriotism of the Ministers. Louis, said Dumouriez, concurred with him.⁴⁶

Dumouriez's association with the Society dated from mid 1790. By his account he had attended irregularly because he found the sessions too noisy and he had criticized the Feuillants for having split from the Club as they were an important balance to the "hot heads".⁴⁷ Although Dumouriez was not a total stranger at the Club, his appearance there on March 19 was an unexpected one. In his address to the members the Minister vowed that his diplomacy would shortly produce "une paix solide ou une guerre decisive" and that, if it be war, he would take his place in the army "pour venir triompher où mourir libre avec mes frères".⁴⁸

Still, whether it be war or peace,

j'ai besoin de conseils, vous me les ferez passer par vos journaux; je vous prie de me dire la vérité, les vérités les plus dures. Mais repoussez la calomnie, et ne rebutez pas un zélé citoyen que vous avez toujours connu tel.⁴⁹

The minutes of the Society record that this speech was exceedingly well received.

46. Ibid., 146.

47. Ibid., 60, 70.

48. Jacobins, III, 439.

49. Ibid., 409.

Robespierre was cautious in his statements at the session:

je déclare à M. Dumouriez qu'il ne trouvera aucun ennemi parmi les membres de cette Société, mais bien des appuis et des défenseurs aussi longtemps que, par des preuves éclatantes de patriotisme, et surtout par des services réels rendus au peuple et à la patrie il prouvera...qu'il était le frère des bons citoyens et le défenseur zélé du peuple.⁵⁰

Dumouriez rushed to the tribune at the conclusion of this speech and embraced Robespierre to the great approval of the members.

Having publicised his patriot credentials at the Jacobins, having begun an open dialogue with Louis, and having sworn to the Assembly to be "l'organe de votre énergie",⁵¹ Dumouriez could feel confident that his diplomatic offensive was founded on strength in the government.⁵² A reflection of this confidence was Dumouriez's ultimatum of March 27th to Austria: if the Austrians continued to arm against France, this would be considered a declaration of war.⁵³ This ultimatum was left unanswered and, as a result, France declared war on Austria on April 20.

50. Ibid., 441.

51. Cited in Chuquet, p. 71.

52. Dumouriez, II, 207-209.

53. Sorel, II, 412.

In the interim the Patriot Ministry functioned extremely well. By Dumouriez's account the Ministers worked extremely hard and competently, especially Roland, and relations between all the Ministers were good.⁵⁴

Weekly dinners, he said, served to plan, in a relaxed and amicable atmosphere, the coming week's agenda and to arrive at compromises on issues of contention, thus preventing disagreements in the presence of the King.⁵⁵ On the predominant issue, that of the pending war, none of the Ministers disagreed with Dumouriez's strategy of isolating Austria.

Important too was the attempt made by Dumouriez to show the King to be in favour of the diplomatic manoeuvres. If, as Brissot had argued in late 1791, a war would force the King to pronounce his opinion on the Revolution, Dumouriez was determined to show that Louis supported the steps that might lead to this war.⁵⁶ Thus, if war were declared, the question of Louis' acceptance of the Revolution would be greatly defused.

The disastrous opening moves of the war tore

54. Dumouriez, I, 371-372; II, 174.

55. Ibid., II, 174.

56. Holland Rose, p. 93.

asunder the unity of the Ministry. Dumouriez's ambitious plans for a vigorous offensive in the north collapsed in the face of even a handful of enemy forces and one French officer, General Dillon, was massacred by his own troops. General Lafayette, commander of the units that were to have led the offensive, openly denounced the military strategy and began plotting a march on Paris.⁵⁷ The reality was, however, that the French army was not prepared for a war. Emigration had produced a serious shortage of trained and experienced officers while in the turmoil of the Revolution discipline had broken down in even the regular, as opposed to the volunteer, units.⁵⁸ As the French reverses became known they heightened disputes and animosities that had been temporarily submerged by the popular clamour for war.

Treachery had been the cry of Dillon's soldiers and so too was it in Paris. The Brissotins took up the charge that there existed an Austrian Committee at Court, while at the Jacobins Feuillant War Ministers and the once popular Narbonne were charged with having deliberately ruined the army.⁵⁹ In the Ministry De Grave, already

57. Sydenham, The French Revolution, p.98.

58. Ibid., p. 98.

59. Ibid., p. 100; Jacobins, III, 681.

overwhelmed by his duties and now suffering from a physical and mental breakdown, resigned and was replaced by a Brissotin, General Servan.⁶⁰ Dumouriez, as opinion slowly became drawn on patriot and royalist lines, was being faced with the difficult problem of having to declare his politics.

Dumouriez sided with the King. In the Minister's view, Louis was sincere in his desire to make the Constitution of 1791 work and was equally sincere in his desire to see the war come to a successful conclusion for the French and the Revolution.⁶¹ Therefore, as we shall see, Dumouriez increasingly came to regard the Brissotins as deliberately trying to destroy the Constitution and perhaps the monarchy in their penchant for confrontation politics.

However, it was in a personality clash that the origin of Dumouriez's rupture with the Brissotins is to be found. The moral righteousness of the pedantic Roland could not accept the easy-going lifestyle of the witty Dumouriez and the two entered into a heated debate at Roland's.⁶² Brissot and Gensonné tried to intervene but to no avail and Dumouriez left very upset. This, coupled with Roland's

60. Dumont, p. 205.

61. Dumouriez, I, 331.

62. Ibid., II, 174; Madame J.M. Roland, Mémoires de Madame Roland, ed. Paul de Roux (Paris, 1966), pp. 157-158.

insistence that his wife be present at cabinet dinners held in his house, brought to an end the working dinners.⁶³

Fundamental disagreements on a number of issues carried the dispute from one between Dumouriez and Roland to one between Dumouriez and the Brissotins. By Dumouriez's account, the first of these disagreements arose over a letter written by Guadet that he wished all Ministers to sign and present to the King. This letter, claimed Dumouriez, demanded that Louis dismiss his non-juring priest and take as his confessor one who had sworn fidelity to the Constitution. Dumouriez was, he said, indignant that Guadet could propose such a tyrannical, atrocious letter and, along with Duranthon and Lacoste, told Guadet to leave affairs of conscience alone.⁶⁴ The second disagreement arose over the appointment of a new Governor for Santo Domingo. Again according to Dumouriez, the Brissotin choice was the ex-Constituent Sillery whom Dumouriez considered too immoral. Lacoste, claimed Dumouriez, agreed with him and named General d'Esparbès to the post. This decision, said Dumouriez, so enraged the Brissotins that Servan and Clavière began boycotting Council meetings.⁶⁵

63. Dumouriez, II, 174.

64. Ibid., 256-257.

65. Ibid., 258; Chuquet, p. 89.

Money was the cause of the third disagreement. Soon after taking office, Dumouriez had asked the Assembly to vote him a six million livre secret expenses fund and, with Brissotin support, this was done.⁶⁶ The funds were not, however, deposited with Brissot's friend Bidermann but with another banker, Amelot. This was done, said Dumouriez, to keep the use of the funds secret, which it would not have been had Bidermann been the distributing agent.⁶⁷ As relations between Dumouriez and the Brissotins deteriorated, Guadet seized on this fund as a means of attacking Dumouriez and so called on the Minister in the Assembly to account for expenditures to date. Dumouriez refused, claiming that the original decree explicitly exempted him from having to account for expenses. The Assembly sided with Dumouriez and defeated Guadet's motion.⁶⁸ As we shall see, however, the secret expenses fund issue was not dead.

Two decrees of the Assembly voted at the end of May brought to the fore the political deadlock now ruling at Council. Servan's appointment in early May had broken

66. Buchez and Roux, XIV, 32-36

67. Dumouriez, II, 259.

68. Buchez and Roux, XIV, 253-254.

Dumouriez's majority of one and now matched Servan, Clavière and Roland against Dumouriez, Duranthon and Lacoste. Thus, the two decrees, one calling for the dissolution of the King's 1200 man Guard, the other for the deportation of non-juring priests, occasioned the first instance of the Council's inability to decide on a course of action to recommend to the King. The deadlock was resolved by Louis' decision to sign the first and Dumouriez's reluctant decision, as he said, to side with the Brissotin Ministers to recommend acceptance of the second. Dumouriez claimed this decision was based on fears that a royal veto would give rise to violent attacks on the non-juring priests by those seeking vengeance.⁶⁹

It was Servan's proposal for the camp of 20,000, however, that proved to be the final straw. Servan had excluded Dumouriez from War Department discussions ever since taking office on May 9th and this exclusion was felt deeply by Dumouriez.⁷⁰ The simmering feud boiled over when Servan, without consulting the other Ministers, proposed to the Assembly that it decree the formation of a permanent military camp near Paris to provide both a training ground for recruits

69. Dumouriez, II, 271-273.

70. Chuquet, pp. 88-89.

and a ready force for the defence of the capital'. The day after this proposal was made, June 5th, a stormy Council meeting took place wherein Dumouriez and Servan were only prevented from drawing swords on each other by the presence of the King.⁷¹ Dumouriez's objection to the plan indicated the breakdown of his relations with the Brissotins. They wished, he said, to use the camp to destroy the Feuillants, **combat** the Court and establish a republic.⁷²

As had been the case with the decree on non-juring priests, Dumouriez came to feel, when the Assembly voted the camp on June 8th, that Louis should sign the decree to prevent reprisals. If enacted, he claimed to have told Louis, plans could be made to render the camp useless for political ends while, if vetoed, four times the decreed number would appear in Paris in defiance of that veto.⁷³ For his part, continued Dumouriez, he considered both decrees to be ill-advised but a veto to be politically explosive.⁷⁴ Louis told the Council he would take both decrees under advisement.⁷⁵

71. Dumouriez, II, 268.

72. Ibid., 268.

73. Ibid., 271-273.

74. Ibid., 273.

75. Ibid., 273.

Delay joined delay and it became apparent that Louis was not about to sign the decrees. On the advice of his wife, and almost certainly by her hand, Roland read an open letter to the King which warned Louis of a public uprising if he failed to sanction the decrees.⁷⁶ Louis thanked Roland for his advice and left the Council meeting. According to Dumouriez, he was called to the King's chambers the next morning and was asked by the Queen if he felt the King should tolerate the behaviour of Roland, Clavière and Servan for much longer. The Minister claimed he advised Louis to dismiss the entire Ministry only to be told that the King desired him to stay on as well as Duranthon and Lacoste.⁷⁷ Dumouriez asserted in his memoirs that he then told Louis he would agree to counter-sign the dismissal of the Brissotin Ministers and remain in office himself provided Louis sanctioned the two decrees and he alleged that Louis gave him his word he would sign them.⁷⁸

The dismissal of Roland, Clavière and Servan,

76. Madame Roland claimed in her memoirs that she wrote the letter. Roland, p. 154. The text of the letter is given in Buchez and Roux, XV, 40-45.

77. Dumouriez, II, 275-276. Louis Philippe believed Dumouriez's account. Louis-Philippe, Memoirs 1773-1793. (New York, 1977), p. 222.

78. Dumouriez, II, 275-276.

which took place the next day, was universally condemned. Brissot attacked Dumouriez in the Patriote française on June 14th expressing regret that he had not raised the mask covering Dumouriez's perfidy sooner and that Dumouriez was "le plus vil des intrigans".⁷⁹ An appearance by Dumouriez at the Assembly to report on the state of the armies, in his new capacity as Minister of War, raised a howl of boos and insults.⁸⁰ Dumouriez's character was attacked at the Jacobins and he was called upon to account for his actions.⁸¹ Robespierre, alone, argued that it really did not matter if three Ministers had been dismissed for what was important was the Assembly and its vigour and patriotism. The Ministry, he said, was a game for the King to play and, as for Dumouriez, his future actions would answer the question of his patriotism. However, he concluded, the lesson to be learned was that even a "patriot" bears constant surveillance by the people.⁸²

To add insult to injury, Louis refused to sign the decrees. Adopting essentially the same tactic as Roland,

79. Quoted in Buchez and Roux, XV, 33.
 80. Ibid., 45.
 81. Jacobins, III, 693.
 82. Ibid., 694-699.

Dumouriez claimed he warned Louis of the public's mood and threatened to resign if he did not sign the decrees.⁸³

Louis accepted his resignation. Prior to making his formal resignation, however, the War Minister gave himself orders to be posted with the Armée du Nord at his rank of lieutenant-General.⁸⁴ Three days later, June 20th, he stood on the lawn of the Tuileries to watch the storming of the palace: his warning had come to pass.⁸⁵

The collapse of the Patriot Ministry was the de facto collapse of the Constitution of 1791. It had been an opportunity, a lost opportunity as it developed, to achieve a working relationship between the executive and legislative branches of the government and it had been lost for sublime as well as petty reasons. Clearly, Dumouriez had been the central figure of the Ministry and, as Jaurès stated it, "il pouvait, mieux que personne, servir d'intermédiaire entre la Gironde et la Cour".⁸⁶ Dumouriez's failure in this role must, ironically, be attributed in large part to the war that he, the King and the Brissotins had sought. The war did not bring the monarchy and the

83. Dumouriez, II, 294-300.

84. Louis-Philippe, p. 237.

85. Dumouriez, II, 314.

86. Jean Jaurès, Histoire Socialiste de la Révolution française (8 vols.; Paris, 1922), III, 223.

Brissotins and their supporters closer together; it served to drive them further apart and rekindle all the old suspicions, fears, distrust and animosities.

Forced ultimately to forsake his "intermediary" role, Dumouriez had proven himself to be, at least in the spring of 1792, a royalist who felt the Revolution had progressed far enough. His association with the Brissotins had been singularly lacking in depth.

CHAPTER 2

THE HERO OF VALMY AND JEMAPPES

The ministerial crisis brought on by the dismissal of Roland, Clavière and Servan and the resignation of Dumouriez three days later, was removed from the forefront of public attention by the events of June 20. This "journée", which saw the occupation of the Tuileries by the people of Paris,¹ became the almost exclusive topic of debate and discussion in the papers, in the Assembly and at the Jacobins. In this situation, Dumouriez's appearance at the Assembly to clear his ministerial accounts did not initiate any further attacks on him nor did any deputies raise questions concerning his expenditures in office.² By early July Dumouriez was on his way to join Luckner's army at Valenciennes.

Marshal Luckner did not like Dumouriez and quickly had him reassigned to a dull command at Maulde.³ Here Dumouriez soon won a following with his soldiers and with the townspeople that proved to be most beneficial for, when ordered by Luckner to abandon Maulde in favour of Metz, Dumouriez, at the request of the municipal officials,

1. For a more detailed description of "the people" see George Rudé, The Crowd in the French Revolution (New York, 1978), pp. 98-101.

2. Buchez and Roux, XV, 375-379.

3. Louis Philippe, pp. 241-242; Dumouriez, II, 331, 336-337, 354-357, 359-360.

refused. He then forwarded to the Assembly the military reasons⁴ for disobeying Luckner's orders as well as proof that the municipality had requested his soldiers to remain. Hence when Luckner seized upon this act of disobedience as grounds for a court-martial, he found the Council prepared to support Dumouriez's action.⁵ Luckner had been out-witted and probably embarrassed by this affair but the precedent established in Dumouriez's career was to rebound on him shortly.⁶

To this minor triumph was added a much larger one when Dumouriez disobeyed a second order, this time from his immediate superior, General Arthur Dillon.⁷ In Paris on August 10th a full scale assault on the Tuileries had resulted in the confinement of the King and the calling of a National Convention to draft a new constitution. Lafayette had then attempted to launch the insurrection he had been

4. Dumouriez argued that although Lafayette had been ordered to move units to Maulde, there would be an indefinite period wherein Maulde would be unprotected. This would leave the department of the Nord prey for an Austrian invasion meaning, as a result, that he would remain in Maulde until Lafayette's troops arrived. Ibid., 242.

5. Ibid., 242

6. See page 74.

7. Not to be confused with Théobald Dillon, killed during the spring campaign.

contemplating since May.⁸ As a prelude to his march on Paris, he ordered his officers to have their soldiers swear allegiance to the King, the constitution and the nation. Dillon obeyed and commanded Dumouriez to do the same.⁹ Dumouriez refused. On hearing the news of August 10th he had written to the Assembly to swear allegiance to the nation and to vow that he would recognize only the people as sovereign. August 10, he wrote to the Assembly, "was to be expected from a nation deceived, betrayed, and driven to extremities".¹⁰ Having correctly judged the political situation, Dumouriez was rewarded by the new Ministry¹¹ with his promotion to Dillon's command. On the collapse of Lafayette's coup and his subsequent emigration, Dumouriez was raised to Lafayette's command.¹²

8. See page 34.

9. Louis Philippe, p. 263; Dumouriez, II, 366-368.

10. Quoted in Holland Rose, p. 112; Buchez and Roux, XIII, 97.

11. It included three of his former colleagues, Roland, Clavière and Servan as well as his former assistant, Lebrun. Danton and Monge completed the Council's membership.

12. Louis Philippe, p. 263. The unfortunate Luckner made the mistake of waiting until Lafayette's coup had failed and so found himself replaced by Kellermann who, like Dumouriez, had immediately accepted the verdict given on August 10. Ibid., 264-265.

Dumouriez's acceptance of August 10 was a total contradiction to his words and actions while Minister for Foreign Affairs. As this acceptance proved to be instrumental in his rapid military rise and seemingly removed him from the royalist cause, it becomes an action of some importance. Yet, can Dumouriez's acceptance of the fall of the King be viewed in a separate context from the millions of French people who similarly acquiesced in Louis' dethronement? Dumouriez's memoirs¹³ state that he regretfully accepted August 10 because his army was thoroughly apathetic on the subject of the King but that, had he been invited to do so, he would have joined Lafayette.¹⁴ This latter claim is a doubtful one¹⁵ and Dumouriez's "regret" is not reflected in the alacrity with which he swore allegiance

13. These memoirs are terribly confusing for parts were written in 1794, the remainder on an ad hoc basis between 1794 and 1822. To the extent that the chronological distinction is clear, both sections argue that Dumouriez was a Bourbon supporter through 1792-1793 and that he was awaiting the proper moment to intervene on behalf of the Bourbons.

14. Dumouriez, II, 350, 365-366. There is some indication, however, that Dumouriez considered August 10 to have been inevitable. Apart from his letter to the Assembly, he allegedly told Merlin (of Douai) in July that the monarchy was doomed (Buche and Roux, XXI, 209), and in his memoirs said that the King's flight to Varennes and his uncompromising attitude had invited just such an insurrection. Dumouriez, II, 366

15. Dumouriez and Lafayette detested each other to such an extent that they were not on speaking terms. Ibid., 326-327, 334-335, 350, 359; Holland Rose, p. 100.

to the new order of things. However, in dealing with an enigma, Dumouriez's interpretation must be viewed as every bit as valid as the interpretation that narrow self-interest guided his actions.¹⁶ In short, his acceptance of August 10 did not necessarily indicate that his royalist sympathies of June had disappeared, only that he, as he had been in March, was politically suitable for promotion in the army.

A reflection of this suitability may be found in a letter written to Dumouriez by his former colleague Roland in mid August. In a "victor-to-vanquished" tone Roland remarked on the turn of fate which had returned him to the Council and Dumouriez to Lafayette's command. On Dumouriez's dismissal of the "patriots", Roland said that the general had found himself involved in a royalist intrigue which in turn had ousted him from the Council. Returning to his old complaint on Dumouriez's morals,¹⁷ Roland stated that even they could be forgiven if the general won victories for the nation. In conclusion,

vous me trouverez dans le Conseil toujours

16. Historians hostile to Dumouriez, such as Sorel, Mathiez and Michelet, would likely have given Dumouriez's response to August 10 as an example of his lack of political conviction. Brace suggests that Dumouriez was governed by self-interest in this action. Brace, p. 494.

17. See page 35.

prêt à seconder vos entreprises tant qu'elles auront le bien public pour objet; je ne connais point d'affections particulières quant il est question de le servir, et je vous vous cherirai comme l'un des saveurs de ma patrie si vous vous dévouez sincèrement à sa défense.¹⁸

Dumouriez was tentatively being forgiven for his actions in June ¹⁹ on the basis of his acceptance of August 10 and in the hope that he would achieve military victories:

Victories were certainly needed. The abysmal performance of the French army in April-May was balanced to an extent by the plodding progress of the Austrian and Prussian armies.²⁰ By early September, however, the Prussian army had taken the fortresses of Longwy and Verdun leaving the road open to Paris. Dumouriez, who had been preparing for an invasion of Belgium, was recalled to take command of the French forces near Verdun. His first war council produced a near unanimous verdict in favour of a hasty retreat before the Prussian army.²¹ Ignoring the

18. Roland, p. 159.

19. That is to say his cooperation with Louis in dismissing the Brissotin Ministers.

20. Dumouriez's efforts as Minister to keep Prussia out of the war had failed.

21. Apart from Dumouriez the one exception was Thouvenot. Dumouriez, II, 389-391. The Council also urged Dumouriez to retreat. Louis Philippe, p. 275.

advice of his officers, Dumouriez took up a daring position just east of Verdun.

Meanwhile, panic and bloodshed prevailed in Paris. Fear of the Prussians arriving at the city gates and urgent demands for more volunteer soldiers became the excuse for the securing of the city through the massacre of prison inmates. Roland, Clavière and Servan seriously discussed the advisability of moving the government to a safer location while Danton, the Justice Minister, urged audacity in the face of the crisis.²²

Danton and Dumouriez were vindicated by the battle of Valmy, fought on September 20, which halted the Prussian invasion and lifted the immediate danger. The following day the Prussians, already badly ravaged by dysentery, sued for a cease-fire and indicated a willingness to expand talks beyond prisoner exchanges. Dumouriez agreed to enlarge the scope of the talks but wrote to the Council for guidelines to follow. Between September 21 and 25, however, the general was largely on his own with unclear assistance from Fabre d'Eglantine, Danton's secretary, and the Alsatian soldier Westermann, then a protégé of Danton's.²³

On the 22nd, Manstein, representing the King of

22. Sydenham, The French Revolution, p. 123.

23. Norman Hampson, Danton (London, 1978), p. 76.

Prussia who was with his army, suggested to Dumouriez that he lead his army to Paris and end the disorders. The Prussian army, said Manstein, would remain uninvolved militarily provided Louis were restored to the throne.²⁴ Dumouriez countered that he too was unhappy with the disorders but that, as a general, his concern must rest with the invading enemy forces and not France's internal problems. At the same time he introduced what was to become his central argument throughout the negotiations: if the Prussians detached themselves from the Austrians, the Austrians would quickly sue for peace and order would be restored in France. Manstein and Dumouriez then concluded a cease-fire and agreed to meet again on the 24th.

Manstein arrived at Dumouriez's headquarters with proposals from the King of Prussia that, predicted Manstein, would end the war. The basis of these proposals was the immediate restoration of Louis XVI and the re-adoption of the Constitution of 1791. Dumouriez interrupted the

24. These statements and much of the ensuing narrative on the negotiations are based on versions given by Dumouriez, Louis Philippe and the Prussian Prince of Hardenberg as well as the narratives given in Holland Rose and Chuquet. Points of contention will be noted specifically. Relevant page references are as follows: Dumouriez, III, 51-66; Louis Philippe, pp. 287-292; Buchez and Roux, XIX, 179-184 (for a lengthy quotation of the relevant passages in Hardenberg's Mémoires d'un homme d'état); Holland Rose pp. 130-131; Chuquet, pp. 123-128.

Prussian colonel by handing him a copy of the Convention's decree transforming the nation from a monarchy to a republic. There could, said Dumouriez, be no further basis for discussion on the monarchy or the Constitution of 1791. He did, however, express his chagrin that affairs had reached "this extremity" but offered no hope to Manstein that the monarchy would be restored.²⁵

The next day Dumouriez took it upon himself to write the King of Prussia. In this lengthy letter²⁶ the general urged Frederick-William to accept the French Republic as the sincere wish of the French people; to detach himself from a war dictated by Vienna but fought by Prussians; to ignore the advice of the "senseless" émigrés whom even Louis despised; and to recognize that a continuation of the war would only further the misfortunes of Louis and his family. To be blunt, however, Dumouriez's letter concluded with the warning that the Prussians had but two choices: recognize the Republic and withdraw or prepare for battle.²⁷ On the same day Dumouriez received his instructions from the Council which stated that no discussions

25. Dumouriez, III, 65-66. As had been the case with August 10, Dumouriez said he was astonished at the overnight transformation and adherence by his soldiers to the new Republic. Ibid., 59.

26. Reprinted in full in Ibid., 401-406.

27. Ibid., 406.

were to take place with the Prussians until they had left French territory.²⁸

Dumouriez did not obey this order. Not having received a reply to his letter of September 25th, he wrote a second letter to Frederick-William.²⁹ In this letter he once again urged the Prussian King to break with the Austrians and swore that the French had no dispute with the Prussians. Frederick-William responded the next day, September 28th, with a bristling memorandum denouncing the Republic and the attempts to divide Austria and Prussia.³⁰ Declaring that he would not be treated like a "burgomaster of Amsterdam", Dumouriez broke off the negotiations and ordered the army, in the presence of the Prussian envoy, to prepare for battle.³¹

Manstein dutifully appeared on the 29th and argued that Dumouriez had misinterpreted the memorandum and requested a continuation of the negotiations.³² Under pressure from Kellermann³³ Dumouriez refused and challenged

28. Holland Rose, p. 131.

29. Summarised in Chuquet, p. 127; Dumouriez, III, 68.

30. Chuquet, p. 127; Dumouriez, III, 69.

31. Chuquet, p. 128; Dumouriez, III, 70.

32. Chuquet, p. 128; Dumouriez, III, 71.

33. Louis Philippe, p. 295.

the Prussians to give battle.³⁴ That night the Prussians broke camp and began their retreat. Further negotiations did take place, though not with Dumouriez,³⁵ and despite the general's bellicose statements, the Prussians were not seriously pursued by the French.³⁶

As might be expected with negotiations of this nature, there are areas of contention, doubt and mystery. As we saw early in the narrative, Dumouriez was joined by Westermann and Fabre d'Eglantine, both Danton's envoys. On d'Eglantine's role one historian has suggested that his official purpose was to mediate between Kellermann and Dumouriez³⁷ but that his true purpose was to ensure, on Danton's behalf, that every effort was being made to separate the Prussians from the Austrians.³⁸ Westermann, on the other hand, quickly usurped the position of Dumouriez's

34. Dumouriez, III, 71.

35. Buchez and Roux, XIX, 183.

36. See page 57.

37. The two shared equal rank and, as such, were engaged in constant quarrels both before and after Valmy as to the proper course of action the army should pursue. Before Valmy the Council usually sided with Kellermann, while after Valmy Dumouriez usually gained the Council's support. Louis Philippe, pp. 293, 295. The issue settled at the end of September by the promotion of Dumouriez to Commander-in-Chief. Danton was instrumental in obtaining this promotion. Chuquet, p. 130.

38. Blanc, VII, 242-243.

go-between with the Prussians, which is peculiar given the fact that Dumouriez claimed not to have known him previously.³⁹ It was Westermann too who was entrusted with an important mission to Paris in the midst of the talks to procure Commune documents attesting to the personal safety of Louis for the edification of Frederick-William.⁴⁰ Beyond these sketchy details nothing else is known of their activities.

Danton's role is almost as elusive. As Justice Minister he had argued strongly at Council that Dumouriez's strategy of splitting the Austria-Prussian alliance should be supported and was successful in gaining its approval, provided negotiations began after the Prussians had left France.⁴¹ One source, the Prince of Hardenberg, claimed that Dumouriez and Danton remained in confidential correspondence throughout the talks and that, with Danton's approval, Dumouriez had promised Manstein an unmolested twenty days to evacuate France.⁴² The Prince also alleged that two of the Convention's three representatives present, Sillery and Carra, had been instructed by Danton to work

39. Dumouriez, III, 53.

40. Buchez and Roux, XIX, 185-186.

41. Chuquet, p. 133. ♥

42. Buchez and Roux, XIX, 181.

with Dumouriez in gaining Prussian approval for the twenty day timetable.⁴³

Whether or not this secret withdrawal convention was ever made, the Prussian retreat was unhampered by the French. Dumouriez claimed he had ordered Dillon and Kellermann to try to cut the Prussian line of retreat but that their lethargy and faulty map reading had allowed the Prussians to escape.⁴⁴ Kellermann, in turn, charged Dumouriez with having restrained him from attacking the Prussians and of having ordered him not to engage in bloodshed provided the Prussians continued their retreat.⁴⁵ In any event, once the retreat began Dumouriez left his army to travel to Paris to concert plans with the Council for an invasion of Belgium.⁴⁶

The importance of Dumouriez's conduct in the Prussian negotiations lies more closely with its interpretation in 1792 - 1793 than with any interpretation

43. Ibid., 183. Sorel claimed the third deputy, Prieur (of the Marne), supported the strategy of splitting the alliance. Sorel, III, 84. Michelet said that Danton directed the entire affair from Paris. Michelet, IV, 220.

44. Dumouriez, III, 76-80, 83-85, 105-106.

45. Kellermann's version was supported by the editors of Dumouriez's memoirs, Berville and Barrière. Ibid., 78, n.1. Also Chuquet, pp. 133-134.

46. Dumouriez, III, 105.

that may be rendered here. However, to place matters in perspective, it would appear that the primary motivating factor at play for Dumouriez was a desire to separate the Prussians from their alliance with Austria.⁴⁷ To accomplish this Dumouriez was prepared to sacrifice whatever military superiority his army enjoyed over the Prussians,⁴⁸ delay the use of confrontation tactics, and restrain Kellermann. The presence of the Prussian King in his army, the enormous suffering of his soldiers and their military vulnerability no doubt led Dumouriez to believe that fair, even friendly, treatment from the French would cause Frederick-William to re-assess his position. It was a great gamble and Dumouriez's failure to win this gamble, as will be seen, was to expose the general to charges of softness toward an enemy and even treason.

In early October, 1792, Dumouriez's strategy of splitting the alliance was known and, to an extent,

47. Which had been his policy as Minister for Foreign Affairs. See page 29.

48. As the phrasing suggests this is at best a confusing issue for, as we shall see later, Dumouriez came to argue increasingly that military considerations had ruled his actions. Louis Philippe felt the French had the military advantage, if only because they were supplied and the Prussians were not. Louis Philippe, pp. 293-294. Chuquet made much the same argument. Chuquet, pp. 129-130.

accepted as being correct. On October 3rd the Convention discussed Dumouriez's military and diplomatic manoeuvres and pronounced in favour of them;⁴⁹ Brissot echoed this in the Patriote française the following day.⁵⁰ Even the habitually suspicious Marat considered the negotiations worthwhile and advantageous but disagreed with prolonging them when the military advantage was so decidedly in France's favour.⁵¹ The approval of the Council was noted earlier. However, as it became evident that the Prussians, were merely escaping, opinions hardened. Marat and Prudhomme, editor of Révolutions de Paris, denounced Dumouriez,⁵² while Dumouriez altered his explanation by formulating a decidedly clever military rationale which has remained a source of confusion to the present.⁵³

49. Buchez and Roux, XIX, 205-209.

50. Elfery, p. 309.

51. J.P. Marat, L'Ami du Peuple (Tokyo, 1967) XV, No. 10 (October 4, 1792), 79-80. Hereinafter noted as Journal.

52. See page 62.

53. The military rationale was that the Prussians had been defeated but had a secure line of retreat; its placement and distress were such that it had no alternative other than to retreat; the real threat and the real enemy was Austria and its army was besieging Lille; and this threat required all the available resources to counter: therefore, to waste men and arms on the Prussians would jeopardize France's ability to meet the Austrian challenge. Dumouriez, III, 93, 105-106.

Still, Valmy had been a victorious battle for the French, the Prussians were retreating and Paris welcomed its new hero.⁵⁴ Addressing the Convention on October 12th, the general declared that liberty was triumphing everywhere and would soon overrun the universe. This war, he said, would be the last for it was a war of reason against despotism; and he vowed that his role was to show himself worthy of command and to uphold the laws decreed by the Convention, the representative of the sovereign people.⁵⁵ Escorted by Santerre, the commandant of the Parisian national guard, Dumouriez appeared at the Jacobin Club on the 14th. Embracing Robespierre on entering, he refused to permit the Society's President, Danton, to afford him a privileged place on the speaking agenda.⁵⁶ When his turn arose he announced to the members that a new era had arrived with the Revolution and that he hoped by the end of the month to be marching at the head of 60,000 men attacking Kings and saving their subjects from tyranny.⁵⁷

Collot d'Herbois then made a speech that

54. Chuquet, p. 135.

55. Buchez and Roux, XIX, 286-289.

56. Jacobins, IV, 386.

57. Ibid., 386-387.

portended the shift of opinion already underway. He began this speech by reminding the Society, à propos of their enthusiastic applause for the general, that without his soldiers, Dumouriez would be without glory. As a general, however, Dumouriez must recognize, said d'Herbois, that his power emanated from his fellow citizens and not from kings, and this meant that he must not compromise with tyrants or serve any cause save that of liberty. On that score, d'Herbois pointed out that Dumouriez deserved reproach for having been overly generous to the Prussians and for having treated their monarch "un peu trop...à l'ancienne manière française".⁵⁸ Dumouriez then rose and demanded that this speech be published.⁵⁹

During this visit Dumouriez also tried to repair relations with the Brissotins. His friendship with Gensonné was renewed⁶⁰ and he and Brissot settled their differences over the dismissal of the three Brissotin Ministers.⁶¹ Dumouriez and Roland were, reputedly, on the friendliest of terms⁶² and the general presented Madame Roland with

58. Ibid., 387-390.

59. Ibid., 390.

60. Dumouriez, I, 323.

61. Chuquet, pp. 137-138.

62. Thiers, III, 67.

a bouquet of flowers.⁶³ He expressed his esteem for Vergniaud and undertook to find employ in the army for Guadet's brother.⁶⁴ For their part, Buzot, a Brissotin supporter, vigorously defended Dumouriez in the Convention against Marat's criticisms of the general's conduct during the Prussian retreat⁶⁵ and the Brissotin weighted Council gave its approval for Dumouriez's projected invasion of Belgium.⁶⁶

Nonetheless, Dumouriez's actions and presence in Paris were not universally applauded. Prudhomme's weekly newspaper had urged its readers on September 29th to watch Dumouriez.⁶⁷ The following week he condemned the Westermann mission to Paris as being shameful: why had Dumouriez made an effort to appease a defeated monarch? What was worse, wrote Prudhomme, Dumouriez had debased the nation by writing to Frederick-William. Prudhomme could offer his readers only three possible explanations for the

63. Roland, p. 160.

64. Chuquet, pp. 137-138.

65. Buchez and Roux, XIX, 221-222.

66. Dumouriez, III, 127. Of the six Ministers, three were Brissotin supporters.

67. Révolutions de Paris, No. 168 (September 22-29, 1792), 13.

escape of the Prussian army: Dumouriez was either a traitor, a dupe of the Prussians', or the Prussian army was far stronger than reports had indicated.⁶⁸ In the October 13th issue Prudhomme denounced Dumouriez's visit to Paris as being irresponsible and questioned the credibility of the general's reports on the numbers of Prussian prisoners taken.⁶⁹

Marat's criticisms began almost simultaneously. In the October 4 issue of L'Ami du Peuple, now entitled Journal de la République française, he stated that prolonged negotiations with a powerful enemy were one thing but, with a defeated one, "la seule négociation est de tomber dessus et de l'exterminer".⁷⁰ The fact that Dumouriez had prolonged the talks, charged Marat, indicated that he was working with the royalists to save Louis XVI. In the same issue Marat reported that two of his colleagues had requested that he cease his attacks on Dumouriez⁷¹ because

68. Ibid., No. 169 (September 29-October 6, 1792), 59-67. Westermann's mission was a topic of brief discussion at the Convention on September 26, where he was erroneously referred to as "an agent of the King of Prussia." Nothing sinister was seen by the deputies in this mission. Buzot and Roux, XIX, 127-128.

69. Révolutions de Paris, No. 170 (October 6-13, 1792), 114.

70. Journal, XV, No. 10 (October 4, 1792), 79-80.

71. The colleagues were not identified nor is the writer aware of any earlier published attacks on Dumouriez.

of the advantages he had gained in the war. His published response to them was that he would if the general destroyed the Prussian army, launched the Belgian revolution, seized Brussels and pressed for Louis' execution.⁷²

Nine days later, Marat launched an attack on Dumouriez that was to mark the beginning both of a quarrel lasting until Dumouriez's flight to the Austrians in April 1793, and of Marat's association of Dumouriez with the policies and the personalities of the "faction infame" led by Brissot.⁷³ Marat reported that two Parisian volunteer

72. Journal, XV, No. 10 (October 4, 1792) 79-80.

73. For the period from September to December, 1792, the writer has found nineteen different labels applied by Marat to the "Girondin party", of which "Girondin" was among the least used and then only in the context of the deputies from the Gironde. Marat's favourite label was "faction" with adjectival variations applied to it, hence its quotation here. Brissot was most often, though not exclusively, referred to as the leader of the faction with Guadet occasionally appearing as a co-leader as in "la faction Guadet-Brissot". Guadet or Roland became sole leaders from time to time but Roland was usually referred to as "l'âme de la faction". On one occasion Gensonné surged into the leadership but then fell (or was raised?) to "l'âme de la faction" before resuming his usual position in "...les Vergniaud, les Gensonné, etc.". In the period from January to April, 1793, "faction" gave way to "les hommes d'état", and saw only one attempt by Marat to define the group he meant by "etc.". This definition was given on January 18th: "La députation des bouches du Rhône s'étoit presque toute coalisée (Rovère and Gasparin excepted) par l'entremise de Barbaroux avec celles de la Gironde, du Finistère et du Calvados". Journal, XVII, No. 101 (January 18, 1793), 7.

battalions, Mauconseil and Republican, had been accused of murdering four prisoners of war and that generals Chazot and Dumouriez had been relentless in their determination to see the battalions punished. This appeared most suspicious to Marat as he could think of no plausible reason for the idle massacre of four unarmed prisoners, and so he suggested to his readers that there must be a plot at work to impugn the reputations of two patriotic battalions. Were the battalions, he asked, an embarrassment to some perfidious general or was there a conspiracy afoot by Roland, the faction and the generals to denigrate Parisians?⁷⁴

Dumouriez was vulnerable on this point, both specifically and generally. In his memoirs he stated that one of the reasons he had supported war in April was that it would get the "hot heads" out of the cities and into a disciplined formation.⁷⁵ Prior to Valmy he had complained of desertions, lack of discipline, slanderous rumormongering and political vigilantism among the volunteers.⁷⁶ To put a stop to this the general had asked for, and received, permission from the Assembly to publish on a national scale his address to the volunteers of Châlons. This address

74. *Ibid.*, XV, No. 19 (October 13, 1792), 149-152.

75. Dumouriez, II, 215.

76. *Ibid.*, III, 31-32, 38-39, 55-56.

warned potential volunteers that if they joined the army, they must submit to military discipline.⁷⁷ Clavière so approved of Dumouriez's initiative to restore order that he queried in a letter to him whether or not it would be feasible to form the worst offenders into a separate army and send them off alone to conquer Europe.⁷⁸

Thus when General Chazot informed Dumouriez of the slayings,⁷⁹ Dumouriez must have regarded it as another example of the indiscipline he despised and seized upon it as a case to set an example. "Hommes criminels," read his proclamation to the battalions, "que je ne puis nommer citoyens ni soldats, la France entière s'irrite de votre crime; livrez vos armes; si vous résistez, j'emploierai contre vous la force".⁸⁰ On no account were any of them

77. Buzot and Roux, XVIII, 17.

78. Quoted in J.C. Renaut, "Clavière et Dumouriez", La Révolution française, I, (1881), 101.

79. Chazot's letter informed Dumouriez that on the night of October 4-5 the two battalions seized four Prussians deserters and threatened to kill them. Summoned from his lodging by municipal officials, Chazot proceeded to harangue the battalions for some time, vowing to die in defending the Prussians' lives. Chazot claimed he was then insulted and menaced and had his own life threatened by some of the soldiers. The Prussians were murdered shortly thereafter. This letter is reprinted in full in Journal, XV, No. 22 (October 16, 1792), 173.

80. Ibid., 176.

ever to serve the Republic again for those innocent of the murders were cowards ("des lâches") for not having prevented the crime. The battalions were to be stripped of their arms and uniforms and transported in disgrace to Paris.⁸¹ Dumouriez then delegated the entire affair to Beurnonville who, Dumouriez claimed in his memoirs, was empowered to restore the battalions to the army once the guilty soldiers had been purged.⁸²

Though Dumouriez's claim may be true, it was also true that he was being pressured in the direction of leniency. Beurnonville was slow in separating the guilty from the innocent and began the march to Paris as he had been ordered to do. En route the battalions were jeered and insulted by various municipalities and, in the case of Mezières, were made to sleep outside the city limits.⁸³

81. The proclamation is reprinted in Ibid., 176-7.

82. Dumouriez, III, 112-113. Another potential factor in the punishment accorded the battalions was given at the Jacobins on October 17 by an unidentified member. "C..." testified that Chazot had previously been denounced by the Mauconseil section as being suspected of favouring aristocratic government and that one of Dumouriez's aides, Bougoïn, had once served in the Mauconseil battalion, but had been recalled and carried the indignation of the section. "C..." concluded by telling the members that Bougoïn, a known supporter of Lafayette, had appeared in the section to claim full credit for the destitution of the battalion. Jacobins, IV, 403.

83. Buchez and Roux, XIX, 316.

News of this treatment enraged the Mauconseil section of Paris, which established a committee of twelve to investigate the charges against the battalions.⁸⁴ Fear of an uprising in Paris when the battalions arrived caused the Military Committee of the Convention to order a halt to Beurnonville's march until such time as an inquiry could be held. Adding further to the problem was the receipt by the Foreign Affairs Minister, Le Brun, of the procès-verbal of the municipality of Rethel,⁸⁵ the town where the slayings had taken place, which stated that the four Prussian prisoners of war were, in fact, four French émigrés. Rumours of the content of this procès-verbal caused the Military Committee to suspend judgement on the battalions.⁸⁶ It appeared possible that Dumouriez had made a mistake.

Unfortunately, it mattered little whether or not Dumouriez had responded quickly to these developments for in Paris, it appeared that the truth was being concealed.

84. Ibid., 316.

85. The procès-verbal was read at the Convention on the 18th. It identified the four men by name and stated that they had been serving in a Russian regiment and had taken advantage of its proximity to the French border to desert so as to spare themselves from fighting fellow Frenchmen. Ibid., 331-334.

86. Journal, XV, No. 23 (October 17, 1792), 181; Ibid., No. 24 (October 18, 1792), 189-191; Ibid., No. 25 (October 19, 1792), 202.

Marat was unable to obtain any official information on the subject and, what was worse, the Surveillance Committee, the Military Committee and the War Minister, Servan, expressed total ignorance, save for Chazot's letter, of any background material on the affair.⁸⁷ Dumouriez became further involved by telling Marat on the night of October 15 that all relevant material could be found at the War Ministry, in his report to the Convention, or at the Surveillance Committee. When confronted with the deputy's protestations to the contrary, Dumouriez turned his back on Marat and walked away.⁸⁸

Retracing his steps Marat once again applied to the Surveillance Committee for information. This committee then troubled itself to demand the release of the procès-verbal of Rethel, which turned out, strangely enough, to be in Servan's possession.⁸⁹ At the Jacobins on the 17th Marat recounted his confrontation with Dumouriez at Talma's glittering fête for the victor of Valmy. He began by

87. Ibid., No. 23 (October 17, 1792), 181.

88. For Marat's version, see: Ibid., No. 24 (October 18, 1792), 192-194; Ibid., No. 25 (October 19, 1792), 196-197; Jacobins, IV, 399-400. For Dumouriez's version, which largely agrees with Marat's, see: Dumouriez, III, 111-115.

89. For some reason Marat did not find this suspicious. He claimed later, October 19, that Le Brun was responsible for keeping the procès-verbal secret.

describing the appalling decadence of this party and noting the presence of three Brissotin supporters, Kersaint, Gorsas and Lasource. He then proceeded to denounce Dumouriez and Chazot on the basis of the procès-verbal and suggested to the Society that these two generals were allied with the "faction".⁹⁰ That Marat was attacking a now famous general three days after his enthusiastic reception at the Society did not please many members. An unidentified member stated, to a mixed reception, that he was not convinced by Marat's "proofs", while another spoke in favour of Dumouriez.⁹¹ Léonard Bourdon supported Marat by denouncing the Ministers as "liars", Chazot as "un être exécrationnel" and agreed there **was the suspicion** of association. However, on Dumouriez, Bourdon reserved judgement and he added the thought that although the slayings were regrettable and a violation of "quelques formes", affairs such as this should be overlooked.⁹²

The next day Marat raised the issue in the Convention. Citing the procès-verbal of Rethel as proof, Marat claimed that the "deserters" were émigré spies

90. Jacobins, IV, 399-400.

91. Taschereau.

92. Jacobins, IV, 400-403. Robespierre's opinion on Dumouriez's conduct was that the general would rectify the situation the instant he was apprised of the true facts. Buchez and Roux, XIX, 310.

conspiring, perhaps, with Chazot and he demanded that Chazot be served with a decree of accusation. The reading of the procès-verbal clearly did not strike the deputies as "proof" of very much, for Marat was recalled to the tribune to explain his conclusions. This he did by adopting Bourdon's argument that the émigrés would have fallen under the weight of the law, later rather than sooner. In any event, he argued, a general does not cashier two entire battalions for a handful of guilty soldiers.⁹³

Kersaint responded to Marat's charges by informing the Convention that the guilty soldiers had been purged by the battalions and the battalions had rejoined the Army of the North. The four émigrés, he said, had wished only to serve the Republic, making their assassinations a tragedy, and he urged the deputies to throw a veil over the issue and proceed with more pressing matters.⁹⁴ Boileau then demanded that the Convention waste no more time on Marat and that the tribune be purified the instant Marat finished any future speeches.⁹⁵

For all intents and purposes the issue of the two battalions was at an end save for an important postscript.

93. Buchez and Roux, XIX, 330-335.

94. Ibid., 335-336.

95. Ibid., 336.

In mid-December the Committee of General Security made its report on the entire affair. This report concluded that the four émigrés had worked against the nation; had been receiving special treatment from the municipality of Rethel; and that émigrés, generally, had been numerous in the vicinity of Rethel. At the same time, the report found that volunteers, as a rule, had been suffering from a lack of food, clothing and lodging, and that resentment towards the émigrés had steadily developed to violent proportions. The four émigrés in question, however, had been murdered by volunteers from a number of battalions. Chazot, the report charged, had chosen two battalions at random to suffer the consequences, while Dumouriez had allowed his prejudices to override an examination of the affair prior to assessing a punishment.⁹⁶ Marat had been vindicated.

Over the history of the Revolution the affair of the two battalions does not, of course, loom very large. Even in the context of Marat's conflict with Dumouriez its importance should not be exaggerated for Marat was of the school of thought that all ancien régime generals should be cashiered by the Republic. As such, he was ever vigilant

96. Journal, XVI, No. 79 (December 20, 1792) 227-228.

97. Ibid., XV, No. 24 (October 18, 1792), 192.

of the slightest deviation, or suspected deviation, from pure patriotism. The demands made by Marat to his colleagues for his "approval" of Dumouriez⁹⁸ indicate reasonably well that Dumouriez would never have gained Marat's approbation. That Dumouriez would "tear off the mask" was only a question of time, and the two battalions had announced the hour: Marat's denunciations of Dumouriez would be virtually ceaseless for the next few months.⁹⁹ Among these denunciations would appear a prediction, on October 31, that Dumouriez would emigrate by March, 1793.¹⁰⁰

Of considerably more importance to this thesis is that the affair of the two battalions prompted Marat first to suggest, and then to assert, that Dumouriez was a "creature" of the Brissotins. Thus, for Marat, Dumouriez's biography was as follows: "ancien espion de cours, le flagorneur puis le rival de Mottié (Lafayette), l'âme damnée de Louis Capet, le protégé et le protecteur de Roland et de la clique de la république fédérative".¹⁰¹

98. See page 64.

99. The succession of issues of the Journal is staggering: October 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 28, 29, 31; November 9, 11, 12, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 28, 29; December 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 27, 30, 31; January 2, 9, 12, 15, 24, 28, 29.

100. Journal, XV, No. 37 (October 31, 1792) 296-297.

101. Ibid., XV, No. 35 (October 29, 1792), 279. The same issue condemned the Prussian negotiations.

The purpose of Dumouriez's visit to Paris, charged Marat, was to concert plans with "the clique" for the establishment of a federal republic.¹⁰²

The affair of the two battalions also illustrated, and suggested, aspects of Dumouriez's character that should not pass unremarked. The general clearly wanted order, obedience, and the freedom to provide leadership. Having become convinced that the volunteers were in need of draconian disciplinary measures to effect some degree of order in the army,¹⁰³ he had sought, in the case of the two battalions, to cope with the situation in the old fashion. Here he displayed, perhaps for the first time, a major misunderstanding of the revolutionary context within which he was working. In disobeying Luckner¹⁰⁴ he had taken care to involve the respective municipality in his action and he informed the Assembly of the reasons for disobeying. A little more than a month later he acted in a far more controversial manner without involving either the municipality or the Convention. For Dumouriez to have assumed that he could march two battalions of Parisian

102. Ibid., XV, No. 24 (October 18, 1792), 194

103. Louis Philippe was of the same opinion. Louis Philippe, 281, 296.

104. See page 45.

volunteers in disgrace to Paris as a public example of the consequences of insubordination on the basis, as he told Marat,¹⁰⁵ of his word that they were guilty, was sheer folly. However, with the exception of Marat, no one of political importance had made an issue of the affair, permitting it to fade slowly and to do a minimum of damage to Dumouriez's reputation.

The affair certainly did nothing to sour relations between Danton and Dumouriez during the general's Parisian visit. As we have seen,¹⁰⁶ the two men had reacted in a similar fashion to the military crisis of late August and early September and this, claimed Dumouriez, had formed a bond between them.¹⁰⁷ In fact, their association may have been of a longer duration. There is some evidence to suggest that Dumouriez had offered Danton the position of Minister of Justice in the Patriot Ministry, and rather more evidence that Danton had intervened on behalf of the abbé d'Espagnac, Dumouriez's war contractor, to obtain supply contracts from Servan in August.¹⁰⁸

105. Dumouriez, III, 112-113; Journal, XV, No. 25 (October 19, 1791), 196-197.

106. See page 51.

107. Dumouriez, III, 117.

108. A. Mathiez, Danton et la Paix (Paris 1919), 16-17; Hampson, pp. 69, 96. The evidence for the offer of a portfolio rests largely on Danton's statements at his trial in 1794.

Charges have also been made that the two were fellow speculators in the war contracting business.¹⁰⁹

It should not appear surprising, then, that Dumouriez claimed in his memoirs to have argued consistently and strongly on behalf of Danton to the Brissotins.¹¹⁰ Dumouriez alleged that he had considered the Brissotins to be losing their influence in October because of their "tortuous" and "machiavellian" politics and that he had recommended Danton's services to them.¹¹¹ Danton, he claimed, was the only man capable of saving France from total disaster. Unfortunately, Dumouriez said he had found the Brissotins unhappy with both him and Danton, the one for winning a battle and relieving the crisis, the other for urging a resolute defense of the capital. The Brissotins, and Dumouriez claimed Danton as the source for this information, had hoped to use the war as an excuse to move the government away from Paris and, in a more secure atmosphere, destroy the Jacobins.¹¹² The result of his visit, Dumouriez maintained, was that the Brissotins made a public display

109. Hampson, p. 96.

110. Dumouriez, III, 116, 125-126.

111. Ibid., 117, 126.

112. Ibid., 116, 125.

of their support for him, to prevent his uniting with the Jacobins, but had refused to confide in him privately and, by praising a man who was in their disfavour, he had unwittingly widened the gap between Danton and the Brissotins.¹¹³

Be this as it may, Dumouriez returned to his army at the end of October to launch an invasion of Belgium.¹¹⁴ Entering that country on November 3rd, Dumouriez published a short proclamation that would soon become a point of contention between the general and the Convention.¹¹⁵ The French were coming as brothers and friends, it read, to restore liberty and to ensure the establishment of a constitution and a government of Belgian making, without French interference.¹¹⁶ Three days later Dumouriez's army successfully stormed the Austrian entrenchments at Jemappes and thereby gained control of the entire country.¹¹⁷ The Republic had carried the war beyond its frontier.

113. Ibid., 126.

114. En route he spent two days at Sainte-Foy's home a fact that would be divulged to the Convention on December 7. Buchez and Roux, XXI, 206.

115. See page 88.

116. Dumouriez, III, 296.

117. Apart from supply problems, the geography of Belgium is such that, once defeated, an army rarely has the opportunity of gaining a second battle position.

For the second time Dumouriez was a hero in Paris. His portrait could be purchased from street vendors and Le Brun, the Foreign Affairs Minister, named his new-born daughter Civilis-Victoire-Jemappes-Dumouriez.¹¹⁸ The Convention enthusiastically applauded the Jemappes bulletin as did the Jacobin Club.¹¹⁹ Even Marat, who had been tireless in denouncing the Dumouriez-Brissotin alliance, was forced to admit that the vast majority considered his ragings on Dumouriez to be ludicrous.¹²⁰ Chabot, who had condemned Dumouriez's actions in June,¹²¹ was lauding Dumouriez at the Jacobins in November for having struggled against Brissotin interference in the Patriot Ministry. By refusing the Brissotins the use of his secret expenses fund, asserted Chabot, Dumouriez had narrowly escaped imprisonment.¹²² If Dumouriez's political associations were not clear, it was clear that virtually everyone was happy with him in public.

Valmy and Jemappes had returned Dumouriez's public standing to that of the previous March and more.

118. Chuquet, p. 143.

119. Buchez and Roux, XX, 244; Jacobins, IV, 473.

120. Journal, XVI, No. 43 (November 12, 1792), 409.

121. Jacobins, II, 693.

122. Ibid., IV, 466.

The general, who had been political anathema in June, would probably have been a prized public, if not private, asset to any political group. Yet the evidence is conflicting on Dumouriez's associations at the time of Jemappes. There had been an association with Danton during September and October, as a minimum, but the evidence suggests mutual financial interests to have been the basis of the relationship. With the Brissotins the evidence is clear that Dumouriez had made an effort to regain their trust but the evidence also suggests that he had been unsuccessful in this. The Jacobins, with the exception of Marat, had been supportive of the general but there is nothing to suggest that Dumouriez had desired a political association with them. Finally, Dumouriez's brief stay with the royalist Sainte-Foy could hardly be construed, given their friendship, as an indication of an on-going royalist association.

In the absence of convincing evidence regarding Dumouriez's political associations we can draw only one firm conclusion from this chapter, being that the campaign begun by Marat to discredit Dumouriez, and to assert that the "faction" and the general were associated, was underway.

CHAPTER III

Dumouriez and the December 15 Decree

The rapid occupation of Belgium by French forces in November, 1792, had posed an ideological problem for the Convention. In the spring of 1790 the National Assembly had renounced all wars of conquest and had vowed never to battle against the liberty of any people;¹ now, in late 1792, the French had occupied Belgium. This ironical situation was partially rectified by the decree of November 19, which promised brotherly assistance ("fraternité et secours") to any people wishing to regain their liberty. However, if the decree had provided an ideological bridge between 1790 and 1792, it was also a flat declaration of war on all of Europe.²

As the war threatened to expand,³ it was naturally to General Dumouriez that the Republic would turn to achieve victories. Despite the jealousy of his fellow officers, said one source, it was recognized among them that he was the only one "qui fut en état de bien conduire une grande armée".⁴ Nonetheless, to place a general in such

1. Sydenham, The French Revolution, p. 91.

2. Brissot had recognized this fact in stating the same month that "we cannot rest until all Europe is ablaze." Quoted in Thompson, The French Revolution, p. 368.

3. It was "confined" to Austria, Prussia and Sardinia in November.

4. Roland, p. 161.

a crucial position without, as we have seen,⁵ firm knowledge of his political convictions, was, at best, a calculated risk. There has been a suggestion that the Brissotins were not only cognizant of this risk but were actively promoting the fortunes of General Miranda, a failed Spanish American revolutionary serving in Dumouriez's army, with a view to supplanting Dumouriez with a more politically reliable Commander-in-Chief.⁶ Whatever the truth of this suggestion it is known that Brissot made an effort to correspond with Dumouriez in November and December. It is also known that Dumouriez did not reply to these letters.⁷

If these letters suggest that the Brissotins had felt Dumouriez to be in need of some cajoling, there was

5. See page 79.

6. Michelet, V, 312-313, 322.

7. This "correspondence", which Brace felt supported his argument that Brissot and Dumouriez were on "friendly" and "cordial" terms during this period, amounts to three letters. On examination it will be found that the only "proof" they attest to, apart from Dumouriez's friendship with Gensonné, is that Brissot believed (or hoped?) that Dumouriez was removed from Jacobinism: "vos ennemis sont les nôtres, les ennemis de l'ordre. Nous les abattons, n'en doutez pas". Brace's argument may be found in Brace, p. 495; the texts of all three letters are reprinted in C. Perroud, Correspondance et Papiers de J.P. Brissot (Paris, 1911), 314-316, 317-319, 320; and the quotation is from Ibid., 320. It is in the last letter, December 9th, that Brissot complained of not having received a reply and this was confirmed in a letter from Miranda to Brissot on December 19. Ibid., 320-321.

a deputy of the Convention who saw the war, the generals and the Republic in dire need of some harsh truths. Cambon, chairman of the Finance Committee, had begun to argue forcibly in early November that the war was bankrupting the Treasury and he was, by the end of November, approaching a full scale confrontation with Dumouriez over the question of army supply.⁸

Dumouriez's army was supplied by the abbé d'Espagnac, a disreputable individual, who had gained the contract in large part due to Danton's influence.⁹ After Valmy Dumouriez had placed no small share of the credit for victory on the talents of d'Espagnac's company¹⁰ and, after Jemappes, had argued that the continuation of d'Espagnac's contract was essential to the continued success of the French forces.¹¹ Charges have been made, however, that Dumouriez's resolute support of his contractor stemmed as much from personal profiteering as from a belief in the indispensability

8. The reader is referred to F. Bonarel, Cambon et la Révolution française (Paris, 1905), 201-205, for a more complete account of the various feuds between Cambon and Dumouriez during the month of November.

9. Thompson, The French Revolution, p. 488. See also page 75.

10. Buchez and Roux, IX, 286-288.

11. Ibid., XX, 400-401; Hampson, p. 97.

of d'Espagnac's services.¹²

Indispensable or not, d'Espagnac's position was becoming less secure. Servan had resigned the War Ministry in late October and had been replaced by Pache, a Jacobin. Pache, in concert with Roland, among others, had investigated the entire army supply problem¹³ and had decided that organization, control and leadership were imperative in this area. The result was the creation in early November of a Central Purchasing Directory which was, commencing January 1, 1793, to oversee, coordinate and administrate all purchasing and supply distribution for every army serving the Republic.¹⁴ Army supply was to be state controlled. Meanwhile Cambon's indignant remarks at the Convention on the ruinous cost of Dumouriez's army provisions had been gaining influence through November. On the 22nd the Convention considered

12. Lefebvre stated that Dumouriez had become "financially independent" as a result of the Jemappes campaign. Lefebvre, 1, 277. See also: Mathiez, Danton et la Paix, pp. 89-90; Thompson, The French Revolution, p. 488; and Hampson, pp. 96-97.

13. Army supply in 1792 could be a research topic of some length and complexity on its own. The problem, essentially, was the absence of any checks or controls once a contract had been awarded. An unscrupulous contractor, if he took pains to involve the respective civil and military authorities in his abuses, was unlikely to be caught in violation of his contract.

14. Chuquet, p. 147.

there to be sufficient suspicion of financial wrong-doing to order the arrest of d'Espagnac and two of his associates, Malus and Petit Jean.¹⁵

The arrests and the creation of the Directory exasperated Dumouriez. He had hoped, after Jemappes, to gain authorisation from the Convention to deal personally and exclusively with d'Espagnac's company for the supply of his army¹⁶ and, now, not only had his contractor been arrested but, by January, the general would have no direct involvement in supply matters. Dumouriez wrote a bitter letter to the Convention condemning the Directory and the arrests, demanded that he be called to the bar of the Convention to speak in defence of his contractor, and, if d'Espagnac was found guilty, to serve the sentence with him. Dumouriez's letter was referred to committee.¹⁷

Meanwhile, the respective committees of the Convention (Finance, War and Diplomacy) had been investigating ways and means of reducing the horrendous cost of the war.¹⁸ Danton and three others¹⁹ were dispatched to Belgium to report

15. Buchez and Roux, XX, 400-401; Bonarel, 201-205.

16. Bonarel, p. 204.

17. Buchez and Roux, XX, 400-401.

18. In the month of December, for example, the war would cost the Treasury 128 million livres. Revenue for the same month would be 39 million livres. Bonarel, p. 231.

19. Camus, Gossuin and Delacroix.

on Dumouriez's supply griefs²⁰ and to make recommendations on means of reducing the expenses. Their report, inspired by Danton but written by Camus, was presented to the committees on December 11.²¹ In the discussions which followed between the committees and the Council, Clavière, Camus and Cambon succeeded not only in urging the report's presentation to the Convention but in gaining acceptance that this be done promptly.²² Thus, on December 15, Cambon stood at the tribune of the Convention and presented what was to become the decree of December 15.

In his introductory remarks, Cambon declared that the purpose of the war was to destroy privilege ("guerre aux châteaux, paix aux chaumières"), and that this object should become statute.²³ The Belgian people, he said,

20. As we have seen the Directory was created in early November and was scheduled to commence officially on January 1, 1793. In the interim, however, all old contracts were declared null and void, few current accounts payable were paid, and no new purchases were made. With supplies dwindling and French credit with suppliers faltering, Dumouriez deluged Pache and the Convention with supply complaints. See Correspondance du Général Dumouriez avec Pache, Ministre de la Guerre (Paris, 1793), which covers the period November - December, 1792

21. Sorel, III, 232-233.

22. Ibid., 233.

23. Buchez and Roux, XXI, 340.

deserved French support but "nous ne voulons pas, nous ne devons pas respecter les usurpateurs".²⁴ Therefore, "il faut...que nous nous déclarions pouvoir révolutionnaire dans le pays où nous entrons".²⁵ To this end, he continued, all existing judicial and governmental structures must be destroyed and replaced by sans culotte creations.²⁶ As well, the cost of the war, and the cost of administering an occupied territory, should be covered by the seizure of the former government's treasury and the assets of princes, their supporters, and churches.²⁷ The assignat, he declared, should become the currency of a liberated territory, not only because it would alleviate the excess of assignats in France, but because, strengthened by the wealth of the new territory, they would quickly regain their value. As a final note Cambon declared that, under this proposal, all French involvement would cease once an occupied territory had elected a government and had paid France's war expenses.²⁹

24. Ibid., 341.

25. Ibid., 342.

26. Ibid., 343.

27. Ibid., 344-345.

28. Ibid., 345-346.

29. Ibid., 347.

The Convention had clearly reached the conclusion that revolutionary rhetoric must yield to economic reality for, in the debate which followed Cambon's address, the deputies voted amendments to make the proposal even stronger. These amendments, which were concerned with voting qualifications and with the question of eligibility for office, excluded all past and present officials, as well as bankers and financiers, from voting or serving in the government.³⁰ With the voting of these amendments, and a third abolishing nobility, Cambon's proposal was enthusiastically decreed by the Convention.³¹

Dumouriez did not receive the news of the decree very happily. It had been his policy since Jemappes to interfere as little as possible in Belgian affairs and to cultivate a personal following among the Belgians.³² To this end he had imposed stiff penalties on his soldiers for looting offences and had demanded the recall of General La Bourdonnaye, a Jacobin, whom he accused of enforcing

30. Ibid., 348. The amendments, moved by Buzot and Boyer-Fonfrede, two Brissotin supporters, were contested by three Montagnards, Merlin (of Thionville), Desmoulins and Bazire. These three deputies argued that the amendments violated the sovereignty of the people and their liberty of choice. Ibid., 349.

31. Ibid., 350-351. It was not voted applicable to Belgium until January 18. Sorel, III, 259.

32. Sorel, III, 173-174.

contributions, looting and upsetting the populace.³³ Dumouriez had also urged the Belgians to call primary assemblies together to elect a new government, and had promised that the French would not interfere in these elections or in the subsequent enactment of a constitution.³⁴ Further, he had refused to consider the taxation to offset the cost of the war, arguing that the Jemappes campaign had been one of liberation not aggrandizement.³⁵ The decree of December 15, he felt, was nothing better than "criminal and sordid avarice",³⁶ which could result solely in the alienation of Belgium and the subsequent loss of a friendly base of operations for his army.³⁷ Dumouriez's views hardened further when Danton allegedly told him that the purpose of the decree was to instigate disorders and thereby hasten the reunion of Belgium and France.³⁸ Determined to

33. Dumouriez, III, 184-185.

34. Ibid., 296.

35. Ibid., 211-212; Brace, p. 497.

36. Ibid., 296.

37. Ibid., 217-218, 296-297.

38. Ibid., 219, 239. Majority political opinion in Belgium favoured independence and was highly conservative. A much smaller segment of opinion desired reunion and republicanism. Dumouriez's views, therefore, reflected the majority's but was in opposition to the Convention's opinion and that of a minority of Belgians. Sorel, III, 173.

contest this decree personally, he gained permission from the Council to return to Paris.

Dumouriez's visit to Paris, which lasted from January 1st to the 26th, was a hectic one. By his account, he had come to Paris to promote and to contest several issues: the repeal of the December 15 decree and the disbanding of the Purchasing Directory; the removal of Pache from the War Ministry and the reinstatement of d'Espagnac; authorisation from the Council to invade Holland in the spring; and to lobby on behalf of Louis XVI, who was then being tried by the Convention.³⁹ As most, if not all, of these problems required political solutions, it was to the Convention in general and the Brissotins in particular that he looked for redress.

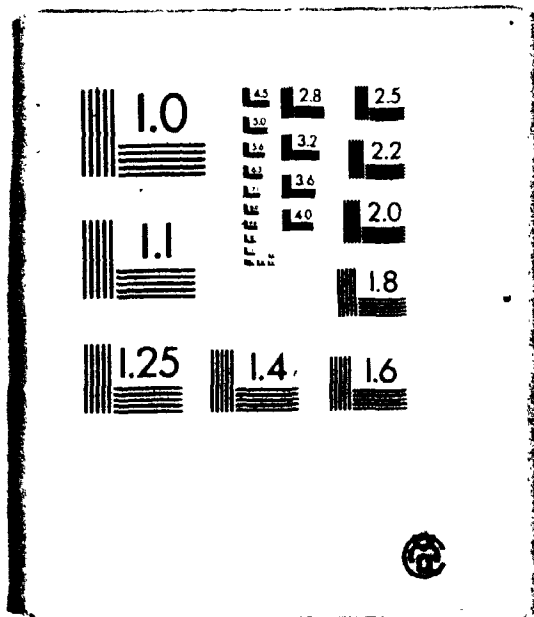
On January 7 a highly republican letter of Dumouriez's was read to the Convention.⁴⁰ Attached to this letter were four memoranda which contained Dumouriez's criticisms of the decree of December 15, Pache and the Purchasing Directory, as well as signed letters of resignation

39. Dumouriez, III, 299.

40. Dumouriez claimed he had extreme difficulty convincing the Convention's President, Treillard, to read the letters. He did not give a reason for Treillard's alleged reluctance. Ibid., 305.

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to take effect should any one of his memoranda not be given satisfaction. These memoranda were not read to the Convention but were, instead, referred to the Committee of General Security.⁴¹ This committee discussed the general's criticisms on the 13th and concluded that he should detail his points more carefully and return on the 15th. On this day he reappeared before the Committee only to find, he said, that the members were solely interested in his charges against Pache⁴² and not any of his other griefs.⁴³ All memoranda were then referred to the Military Committee which, at the scheduled time for discussion, had only five members in attendance. Dumouriez claimed he was enraged by this and told the five members to contact him when a better number could attend. He was never contacted.⁴⁴

Meanwhile he had been meeting with Cambon to register his objections with the December 15 decree. Cambon offered no hope of a change in policy, allegedly telling

41. J. Mavidal and E. Laurent, Archives Parlementaires, première série, 1787-1799 (82 vols., Paris, 1868), LVII, 258-259.

42. Although Pache had entered the Ministry as a protégé of the Rolands, he had quickly joined the Jacobins. As a result, both Pache and the War Ministry were the subject of repeated arguments between the Brissotins and the Montagnards in the Convention.

43. Dumouriez, III, 305-306.

44. Ibid., 307.

Dumouriez that he would have to recognize that the Treasury was not a bottomless pit and that without Belgian resources the war would soon bankrupt the Republic.⁴⁵ Dumouriez claimed he had responded by stating that if the decree resulted in a Belgian revolt, the Republic could expect to see a full-scale rout of French forces in the spring.⁴⁶ Neither side having relented in their arguments, they met a second time a few days later, only to enter into a highly vocal dispute which ended when Dumouriez abruptly walked out of Cambon's house.⁴⁷ Cambon subsequently announced to the Convention that if the decree was not declared applicable to Belgium, he would attribute this to the power of General Dumouriez's veto. Furthermore, he warned the deputies that the Republic could not depend on a general who threatened resignation over every issue distasteful to him.⁴⁸ The December 15 decree was voted applicable to Belgium.

Dumouriez fared much better, indirectly, with Danton. As we have seen,⁴⁹ Danton had been sent to Belgium

45. Ibid., 339-340.

46. Ibid., 340-341.

47. Ibid., 341-343.

48. Buchez and Roux, XXIII, 251.

49. See page 85.

at the end of November to investigate Dumouriez's supply
grievs. He returned on the 14th of January and told the
Convention a week later that, despite Pache's claims to the
contrary, the army in Belgium was almost totally lacking in
provisions and supplies. Danton then proceeded to suggest
that the War Ministry be divided between two men, thus re-
lieving Pache of the supply problem.⁵⁰ In the face of
Danton's report, Pache's Jacobin support began to erode⁵¹
before the Brissotin attacks on the War Minister and, on
February 4th, he was replaced by General Burnonville, a
friend of Dumouriez's.⁵² Shortly thereafter the Purchasing
Directory was abolished, Malus and Petit Jean were rein-
stated, and on the motion of Thuriot, a friend of Danton's,
d'Espagnac was released.⁵³

The Brissotin assault on Pache's War Ministry
inevitably involved Dumouriez. As the best-known general in
the Republic and as one who had consistently condemned Pache,
he was in a position to provide useful arguments for Pache's

50. Hampson, p. 98.

51. He was attacked at the Jacobins by Desfieux
on January 31st. Jacobins, V, 13.

52. The Jacobins had supported Burnonville's
election to the Ministry but after February 15th the Minister became
a regular target for Jacobin attacks.

53. Hampson, p. 98.

dismissal and to lend a prestigious reputation to that end. It is known that Dumouriez met several times with the Brissotins during January⁵⁴ but it is uncertain whether these discussions portended anything more than ad hoc get-togethers. Governor Morris, the American representative to France, suggested in a letter to President Washington that Dumouriez and the Brissotins had joined forces: "Vergniaud, Guadet, etc., sont en ce moment intimes avec Dumouriez, et l'on m'assure que l'administration actuelle doit être renversée, en commençant par Pache...".⁵⁵

Dumouriez's version of his meetings with the Brissotins disclaimed any meaningful results. He had approached the Brissotins, he said, to urge them to save Louis from the scaffold, and to that end he offered military intervention as a means of re-establishing order.⁵⁶ The "chefs de la Gironde" allegedly responded that they did not wish to see the army used for political purposes but that two of them, Gensonné and Pétion, promised to intervene on Louis' behalf.⁵⁷

54. As evidenced in a letter dated January 10 from Brissot to Miranda: "J'ai vu plusieurs fois le général Dumouriez". Quoted in Perroud, 335.

55. Quoted in Jaures, VI, 336.

56. Dumouriez, III, 321.

57: Ibid., 323-324.

Dumouriez also claimed to have petitioned Clavière, Guadet, Condorcet, Vergniaud, Le Brun and Garat to support Louis.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, Dumouriez said, the Brissotins had decided to vote against the king in the hope that, once the monarch had died, they would receive widespread public support for putting an end to political strife. This decision, the general concluded, was a blunder and represented the weak and shallow machiavellianism of the Brissotins.⁵⁹ Putting his opinions into action, Dumouriez claimed to have ended his friendship with Gensonné when the deputy voted for Louis' execution.⁶⁰

If the Brissotins had rejected Dumouriez's advances, there is some evidence to support Dumouriez's claim that the Jacobins had been trying to gain his support. According to Dumouriez, he had been urged by Anarcharsis Cloots and Dr. Seyffert to attend sessions of the Jacobin Club and that these advances had led to the proposal of a meeting with Proli, Desfieux and Saint-André.⁶¹ Dumouriez claimed to have agreed, provided Proli was excluded, and that on meeting with the other two Jacobins he had indicated a willingness to attend the sessions, if the Society expelled

58. Ibid., 309, 317, 326.

59. Ibid., 313-316.

60. Ibid., 324.

61. Ibid., 326, 350.

Marat and his followers.⁶² This statement was seized upon by Desfieux who, at the Jacobins on January 27, told the members that Dumouriez would attend if Marat were expelled. There was no debate on this statement.⁶³

Dumouriez's demand that Marat be expelled was an indication that their conflict had been growing. Marat had denounced Dumouriez's presence in Paris as being part of a plot by the "faction" to gain Pache's dismissal and had reminded his readers that Dumouriez was a member of the "faction".⁶⁴ Dumouriez said that the cumulative effect of these charges had been devastating: "plus ces calumnies etaient grossieres, plus elles faisaient d'effet sur le peuple".⁶⁵ His soldiers, he claimed, slowly became suspicious that Marat's "outrages" might be true and, as a result, the soldiers no longer troubled themselves to defend his name against Marat's calumnies.⁶⁶ One possible example of this gradual acceptance of Marat's opinion was that Puydhomme was now speaking of a close relationship between Dumouriez and

62. Ibid., 350-352.

63. Jacobins, V, 11.

64. Journal, XVI, No. 96 (January 12, 1793), 370.

65. Dumouriez, III, 223.

66. Ibid., 223.

the Brissotins. Dumouriez, Prudhomme wrote, was mirroring the earlier actions of Lafayette and should, if he was a sincere patriot, obey the Convention, apply the December 15 decree and cease thinking he had a royal veto.⁶⁷ Marat now had a second major voice for his Dumouriez-Brissotin charge.

These two individuals were, nonetheless, expressing a minority view. As we have seen, Dumouriez failed to achieve what he claimed to have desired most, the preservation of Louis' life and the repeal of the December 15 decree. The Brissotins had resolutely supported Cambon's decree and had voted for Louis' death, while the election of Bernonville to the War Ministry had been hailed as enthusiastically by the Jacobins as by the Brissotins. There was never any question, however, that the Brissotins, as well as the Jacobins, recognized Dumouriez's military talents. In much the same way that General Montesquiou had been forgiven his political errors in the fall,⁶⁸ Dumouriez's outspoken remarks would be forgiven, provided he continued to gain victories. Thus, his appearance before the Council in mid-January to discuss his

67. Revolutions de Paris, XV, No. 183 (January 5-12, 1793), 121-122. As we shall see in the next chapter, Prudhomme did not return to his assertion that Dumouriez and the Brissotins were associated.

68. General Montesquiou had been ordered arrested for his suspected royalist sympathies but, when news of his successful invasion of Savoy reached the Convention, he was given a reprieve.

spring military strategy did not encounter any significant debate.⁶⁹

Events almost overran his strategy of invading Holland for there were indications that England was considering neutrality in the war. Near the end of his visit to Paris, Dumouriez met with De Maulde, the former French representative in Holland, Benoît, a French embassy official recently returned from London, and Le Brun, the Foreign Affairs Minister. De Maulde reported that van Spiegel, the Grand Pensionary of Holland, and Lord Auckland, the British representative in Holland, had expressed a desire to negotiate with Dumouriez on the neutrality question.⁷⁰ Benoît, for his part, said that Prime Minister Pitt had requested the nomination of Dumouriez as the French negotiator in the neutrality discussions and that this nomination would be considered proof of France's sincerity by the British Government.⁷¹ Le Brun then proposed to the Council that Dumouriez be sent to London to request an immediate war

69. Dumouriez complained in his memoirs that none of the Ministers took an interest in his plans because they wanted Pache to assume all responsibility for the decision. Dumouriez, III, 363. The Council, in January, comprised Roland, Clavière, Monge, Le Brun, Garat and Pache.

70. Sorel, III, 272; Dumouriez, III, 384.

71. Dumouriez, III, 384. Sorel stated that Benoît "encouraged" Dumouriez to believe De Maulde's remarks. Sorel, III, 272.

or peace decision from Pitt.⁷²

The Council refused,⁷³ forcing Le Brun to adopt a more circuitous route. He reappointed De Maulde to his Dutch post and instructed him to arrange a meeting between Auckland and Dumouriez.⁷⁴ Maret, the former French representative in Belgium, was dispatched to England to ascertain the truth of Benoît's remarks and, if Dumouriez traveled to England, to inform Chauvelin, the French representative, of his immediate reposting to Venice or Florence.⁷⁵ Dumouriez left Paris on January 26 depressed, he said, by the political anarchy but optimistic that the diplomatic offensive would succeed.⁷⁶

Revulsion against the execution of Louis XVI doomed the offensive to failure. Chauvelin was ordered out of England by February 1st and Maret's arrival was greeted with his deportation papers.⁷⁷ George III of Britain appeared

72. Dumouriez, III, 385; Sorel, III, 272.

73. Monge, Pache and Clavière voted against, Garat in favour, Sorel, III, 272.

74. Dumouriez, III, 391, De Maulde's re-appointment was short-lived. On March 9th he appeared at the Jacobins to denounce Le Brun for dismissing him because he had negotiated with Auckland in February. Jacobins, V, 80.

75. Dumouriez, III, 391; Sorel, III, 273.

76. Dumouriez, III, 391.

77. Ibid., 393; Sorel, III, 274.

in public on January 24 to cries of "War on the French!", and he demanded four days later that the Parliament vote a re-armament program.⁷⁸ Emotions were running as high in France, culminating in a formal declaration of war on England and Holland on February 1st. Dumouriez cancelled his meeting with Auckland, declaring that England was responsible for the war, not France, and that he considered van Spiegel guilty of fomenting anti-French feeling and of harbouring émigrés.⁷⁹

Dumouriez later claimed that the Convention's declaration of war on England and Holland decided him on a counter-revolutionary course of action.⁸⁰ He said that he had felt the declaration to have been premature and irresponsible,⁸¹ the work of Brissot, who was "jamais plus content que quand il pouvait faire du mal".⁸² If Dumouriez's claims were true, his activities did not suggest them. He had ordered Miranda to begin the siege of Maestricht and

78. Sorel, III, 274.

79. Dumouriez, III, 396-397.

80. This was one of many such claims in Dumouriez's memoirs, of which the earliest was his assertion that the declaration of the Republic (September 21, 1792) had caused him to hope that a successful war would enable him to restore the Constitution of 1791. Ibid., 58. The claim noted in the text may be found in Ibid., IV, 12-14.

81. Ibid., III, 395.

82. Ibid., II, 136

had his own army poised for an invasion before he knew of the declaration.⁸³ Further, the invasion of Holland had consistently been Dumouriez's policy⁸⁴ and although he had claimed this would not occasion England's entry into the war,⁸⁵ he must have recognized that this was a de facto declaration of war on England. In any event, Dumouriez published a republican proclamation to the Dutch people, which urged them to join in his war of liberation,⁸⁶ and began his invasion of Holland on February 16th.

By this action and by his having undertaken the diplomatic mission in pursuit of British neutrality, Dumouriez would, at least publicly, appear to have been reconciled to the Republic. Despite his failure to save Louis or to obtain the repeal of the December 15 decree, he had gained some redress in the dismissal of Pache, the reinstatement of Malus, Petit Jean and, shortly, d'Espagnac, and approval for the invasion he had long promoted. If the Brissotins had not shared his political opinions at least they, and Danton, had been prepared to support his military opinions.

83. Chuquet, p. 160.

84. Lefebvre, I, 282; Sorel, III, 175; Dumouriez, III, 224.

85. Dumouriez, III, 224.

86. Reprinted in Revolutions de Paris, XV, No. 189 (February 16-23, 1793), 359-360.

The Jacobins had been almost as resolute in their support for Dumouriez the general, and, as evidenced by his meeting with Sainte-Andre and Desfieux, must have considered Dumouriez's politics to have been flexible enough to permit the hope that he might attend the Club on a regular basis. Further, with the exception of Marat, no Jacobin of any importance had considered Dumouriez to be allied with the Brissotins.⁸⁷ Finally, no important political figure had expressed any concern for Dumouriez's loyalty to the Republic. He may not have been intimate with any group but both the Brissotins and the Jacobins had faith in his continued loyalty.

87. In fact, Robespierre flatly denied on December 12 that Dumouriez was associated with the Brissotins and added that Dumouriez held them in contempt. Jacobins, IV, 574.

CHAPTER IV

Flight to the Austrians

The invasion of Holland was a bold strategic decision for the Republic to have made. It will be seen on the accompanying map that Custine's forces at Mainz suffered from badly over-extended supply and communication lines and that the security of Dumouriez's army was predicated on the ability of Miranda to hold the Austrians in check at Maestricht and Aix-la-Chapelle. Dumouriez's plan was to overrun the poorly defended Holland as quickly as possible and then march down the Rhine to rejoin Miranda's forces. Custine was to direct his forces on Coblenz.¹

All began well, at least in Holland. Dumouriez's army quickly seized the fortresses of Breda, Klundert and Geertruidenberg, before halting at Moerdyk. The road to Rotterdam was almost open. Meanwhile Miranda's siege of Maestricht had collapsed under the pressure of an offensive by the Austrians, under the Prince of Coburg. The French soon lost Aix-la-Chapelle, Trier and Liege and, by March 9th, the Austrians were advancing on Louvain, the last stronghold before Brussels. Not only did this Austrian advance threaten to sever Dumouriez's supply lines but his presence in Belgium was deemed a necessity by the Council. The invasion of Holland was abandoned.²

1. Chuquet, pp. 161-162.

2. Ibid., pp. 162-164.

Dumouriez had not been in Belgium since the implementation of the December 15 decree and he claimed that he had been appalled on his arrival in Brussels on March 11 to find the area in total chaos.³ He was also angered by the excesses of some of the Council's commissars⁴ and he elected, essentially, to declare a state of emergency with himself as chief executive officer.⁵ Clearly overstepping his authority, he dismissed all of the commissars; banished the Jacobin military commander of Brussels, Moreton, to Douai; the gates of Brussels were closed and armed patrols sent through the city to arrest brigands and deserters; "General" Estienne, commander of the Légion des sans-culottes was arrested and the legion disbanded; magistrates dismissed by the commissars were reappointed and instructed to apply the law to all offenders, be they French or Belgian and he demanded that church property be restored under penalty of arrest.⁶ Dumouriez was determined to have order.

In opposition to these actions were the Convention's

3. Dumouriez, IV, 62.

4. These commissars had been appointed by the Council on January 18 and were instructed to apply the December 15 decree in their respective cities.

5. Dumouriez, IV, 62; Louis-Philippe, pp. 377-379.

6. Dumouriez, IV, 63-67; Louis Philippe, pp. 377-379.

representatives in Belgium.⁷ On protesting his authoritarianism, he allegedly responded by telling them that all laws were secondary to public safety; that the Convention did not understand the situation in Belgium, having been misled by false reports from its representatives; that he held the responsibility for the army and the reoccupation of Belgium; and that he would have consulted with them before acting but, since they had fled Brussels for a safer locale, he had been forced to act unilaterally. Moreover, regardless of their opinions he would alter none of his ordinances. Camus, one of the representatives, then threatened him with assassination if he attempted to become another Caesar, and the deputy concluded that he would write a most unfavourable report to the Convention.⁹ Camus need not have concerned himself with a report for Dumouriez had sent one of his own to the Convention.

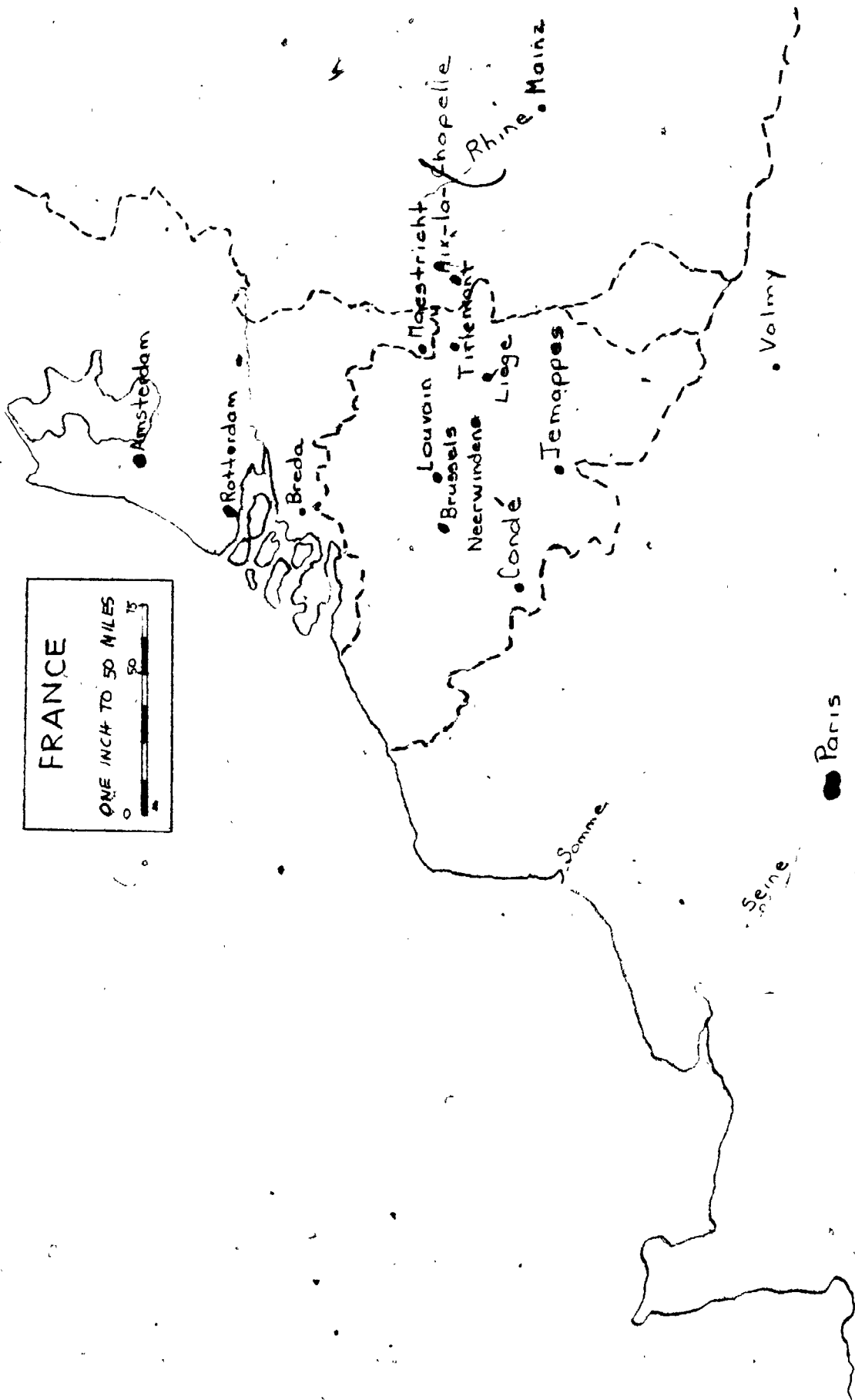
The controversial March 12 letter was written and intended for the benefit of the deputies to the Convention. In it, Dumouriez declared that "la salut du peuple

7. The deputies were Gossuin, Camus, Treilhard and Merlin (of Douai).

8. Dumouriez, IV, 68-70. Louis Philippe said the meeting saw "lively altercations and violent recriminations on all sides". Louis-Philippe, p. 380.

9. Dumouriez, IV, 70-72; Rapports des Représentans du Peuple Camus, Bancal, Quinette, Lamarque (Paris, 1796), p. 6.

FRANCE
ONE INCH TO 50 MILES
0 50 100



Rhine Mainz

Paris

Somme

Seine

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est la loi supreme" and that, accordingly, the actions he had taken in Belgium were necessary to save the army and the honour and security of the Republic.¹⁰ The letter accused the representatives on mission of remitting misleading reports and it accused the commissars of trampling on Belgian rights, insulting religion, and of pillaging the countryside. As a result of the false reports, the Convention had been unaware of the degree of alienation felt by the Belgians towards the French and the tyranny of the commissars had remained unchecked.¹¹

This combination of poor communication and tyranny, he continued, had caused the Belgians, spurred on by their priests, to arm against the French. Regretably, "c'est pour eux une guerre sacrée; c'est pour nous une guerre criminelle".¹² Cambon and Pache were singled out for criticism in the letter for their respective financial and military policies and Dumouriez reminded the deputies of his four memoranda which, if they had been acted upon, had contained all that was necessary to remedy the current problems.¹³ The letter concluded on a conciliatory, if firm, note:

10. Dumouriez, IV, 408, 412.

11. Ibid., 410-411.

12. Ibid., 412.

13. Ibid., 409-410.

En ce moment, vous tenez dans vos mains le sort de l'empire, et je suis persuadé que la vérité et la vertu conduiront vos décisions, et que vous ne souffrirez pas que vos armées soient souillées par le crime, et en deviennent les victimes.¹⁴

The letter arrived four days after the mysterious uprising of March 9-10 in Paris, which had introduced the demand that the Convention be purged of certain "unfaithful deputies", and it saw the destruction of the printing press of Brissot's Patriote française.¹⁵ This uprising and the news of French set-backs in Belgium had the effect of intensifying conflicts in the Convention and of moving the Republic to enact legislation to cope with the new crisis.¹⁶ Dumouriez's letter, in this context, was potentially explosive and the acting President, Bréard, refused to read it to the Convention, referring it instead

14. Ibid., 412.

15. Sydenham, The French Revolution, pp. 144-145. Ironically, as it developed, in one of the first issues of the Patriote thereafter, March 12, the Brissotins claimed Dumouriez's association: "Dumouriez loves his country, he will save it in company with the republicans, he will not destroy it in company with the anarchists". Translated and quoted in Ellery, p. 333.

16. See page 142.

to the Committee of General Defence.¹⁷ At the Committee, Robespierre and Barère urged the immediate arrest of Dumouriez, but Danton and Delacroix cautioned against this, arguing that Dumouriez's military talents were essential to the Republic.¹⁸ Vowing to obtain a retraction of the letter or to drag the rebellious general back to Paris, Danton and Delacroix gained a reprieve for Dumouriez from the Committee, and set off for Belgium.¹⁹

It is difficult to assess Danton's actions in defending Dumouriez in relation to, in this instance, the demands by Robespierre and Barère that Dumouriez be arrested. This difficulty arises from the fact that Dumouriez had received overwhelming support in the Convention and, though to a lesser extent, from reports sent by the Convention's representatives in Belgium. On March 12, for example, representatives of the Poissonnière section of Paris had presented a petition to the Convention calling for the

17. Gensonné, the President, was absent from the Convention the day the letter arrived. Brace, p. 505, n. 50; Archives Parlementaires, LX, 187. The composition of this committee was as follows: Brissot, Pétion, Doucet, Gensonné, Barère, Sieyès, Guadet, Rowyer, Penières, Brunel, Lacaze, Boyer-Fonfrède and Defernon. Sydenham, The Girondins, p. 149, n.1. To avoid confusion in the ensuing narrative, it should be noted that any deputy was free to attend the Committee's sessions.

18. Archives Parlementaires, LX, 49. Chuquet asserted that Robespierre and Barère had called for the arrest. Chuquet, p. 179.

19. Archives Parlementaires, LX, 49.

dismissal of Beurnonville and the arrest of Dumouriez.

"A cry of indignation" greeted the reading of this petition with Isnard, Marat, Léonard Bourdon and Barère all rising in turn to condemn the petition and its authors.²⁰

A second petition read the same day, calling for the arrest of the Brissotins and their supporters, was similarly condemned.²¹

Two days later Camus' "unfavourable" report²² arrived. This report, which was, in fact, two reports, one for the Convention and one for the Committee of General Defence, asserted that order was being restored in Belgium, but that Dumouriez was employing extraordinary means to achieve this. Camus recommended that the Committee be vigilant of Dumouriez's activities.²³ On the 19th Camus reported that Dumouriez's army lacked provisions of all types, but that Dumouriez had been taking "satisfactory" measures to correct these problems.²⁴ Beurnonville then reported that

20. Ibid., 122-126. The section retracted this petition on the 15th.

21. Ibid., 127. This petition illustrates well the problem of the "Girondin party" as it listed a half dozen deputies before trailing off to an "etc."

22. See page 106.

23. Archives Parlementaires, LX, 189-190, 207.

24. Ibid., 303.

Dumouriez had retaken Tirlemont.²⁵ When Camille Desmoulins charged that Camus and Burnonville were giving the Convention incomplete reports, he was attacked by Boyer-Fonfrède before the Convention passed to the order of the day.²⁶

The attitude of the Convention, before and after Danton's defence of Dumouriez at the Committee, would appear, therefore, to have been favourable towards Dumouriez. While one could only speculate whether knowledge of the March 12 letter would have altered this attitude, it is reasonable to assume that Danton's defence was neither sinister nor isolated. The prevalent view was, undoubtedly, that Dumouriez's military talents were needed if the war in Belgium was to be turned to the Republic's advantage.²⁷ If he had lost his head politically, as Danton had argued, he still had his military one.²⁸

25. Ibid., 320.

26. Ibid., 321.

27. This was Marat's argument in condemning the Poissonière petition and, as his defence of Dumouriez was so completely at odds with all he had said and written previously, one can only accept his explanation as being sincere.

28. Archives Parlementaires, LX, 49. Mathiez, (Danton et la Paix, p. 122), argued that Danton was sufficiently powerful on the Committee to ensure that the March 12 letter would remain a well-kept secret. However, neither Mathiez nor Hampson (p. 105) nor Sorel (III, 347) considered Danton's defence to have been suspicious.

In Belgium Dumouriez was manoeuvring his army to do battle with the Austrians. After his initial success at Tirlemont,²⁹ he met the main Austrian army at Neerwinden and was defeated. Although there was cause to regard this battle as a victory for the French,³⁰ Dumouriez had to abandon the field of battle and regroup near Louvain. In explaining these events to the Convention, Dumouriez wrote that he was apprehensive about the retreat because the Belgians had been manifesting a strong disapproval of the French. Be that as it may, he promised to do everything in his power to regroup the army safely and he vowed his life to the service of liberty and the nation.³¹

Dumouriez's explanation also suggested that a large part of the problem at Neerwinden had been the lack of discipline among the volunteers. This suggestion prompted a lively debate in the Convention which confirmed that Jacobin

29. This was a minor affair, involving hundreds not thousands of soldiers.

30. Beaumontville reported it as such to the Convention on March 21. Archives Parlementaires, LX, 390. At Neerwinden the center and right flank of Dumouriez's army had inflicted serious damage on the Austrians but his left flank had collapsed, allowing the Austrians to penetrate the French line. In view of this, Dumouriez could not risk a continuation of the battle the next day without courting the possibility of envelopment.

31. Ibid., 390-391.

support for Dumouriez was eroding.³² François Aubry, who at best was a remote supporter of the Brissotins,³³ stated that no army could function without discipline, and he urged the Convention to enact stricter military laws.³⁴ Lanjuinais, a strong Brissotin supporter, seconded Aubry's remarks.³⁵ Augustin Robespierre disagreed with Aubry, arguing that "le Code pénal sera toujours inutile tant que nos généraux

32. An examination of the proceedings of the Jacobin Club from February to mid-March will demonstrate that Dumouriez was not the subject of serious criticism at the Society, and that the criticisms which were made were given by unimportant individuals. Robespierre was accused by Brissot (J.P. Brissot To His Constituents (London, 1794) p. 86) in May, 1793, of having been highly critical of Dumouriez prior to March 10; and Garat made reference in his memoirs (quoted in Buchez and Roux, XVIII, 336-339) to a meeting with Robespierre prior to March 10, at which Robespierre allegedly stated that he had desired Dumouriez's arrest in January because of his counter-revolutionary activities with the Brissotins. Whatever the truth of these claims, Robespierre did not publicly criticize Dumouriez until April 1st. The "confirmation" arises from two denunciations made at the Jacobins on March 17 by Desfieux and Augustin Robespierre. Desfieux based his remarks on the "liaisons de Dumouriez avec la faction de la Gironde" and, in particular, Gensonné, while Augustin flatly accused Dumouriez of being a "traitor". Jacobins, V, 92-93.

33. Aubry signed the petition of 6 and 19 June 1793, protesting the arrest of the Brissotin deputies and their supporters.

34. Archives Parlementaires, LX, 392.

35. Ibid., 392.

seront des traîtres";³⁶ and Marat, whose appearance at the tribune was greeted with "voilà la cause du désordre qui règne dans nos armées",³⁷ shouted out: "c'est moi qui, de tout temps, me suis élevé contre les plans de vos généraux".³⁸

The next day, March 22, a report by Camus was read to the Convention which resolutely supported Dumouriez's suggestion. Camus largely blamed the defeat at Neerwinden on the appalling desertion rate and the rampant indiscipline of the volunteers. Courts-martial, he said, were totally worthless as a preventive measure.³⁹ Discussing the civil disorders as well, Camus stated that calm had been restored following the disciplining of "a few over-zealous commissars" and the deputies' (on mission) insistence that the commissars receive consent from the Convention for all future actions.⁴⁰

Meanwhile Danton and Delacroix had met with Dumouriez on the night of the 20th. According to Dumouriez,⁴¹

36. Ibid., 392.

37. Ibid., 392.

38. Ibid., 392. The reader should note Marat's use of "vos".

39. Ibid., 436.

40. Ibid., 436. These remarks are ironical when one considers Camus' earlier disapproval of Dumouriez's dismissal of the commissars.

41. Danton, as we shall see, never did give a satisfactory account of this meeting, and if Delacroix gave an account, the writer has not seen it.

he told them that he was indignant at the "crimes" of the Convention and that, despite their repeated requests, he would not retract his March 12 letter.⁴² Dumouriez then alleged that Danton and Delacroix had expressed "sympathy" for the general's complaints about the Convention and that he, Dumouriez, had agreed to write an "insignificant" letter to the Convention to provide Danton with the appearance of having reached a compromise.⁴³ Danton had not gained a retraction of the letter, nor had he arrested the general, as he had promised the Committee.⁴⁴

Nonetheless, if Dumouriez's March 12 letter and his alleged remarks concerning the "crimes" of the Convention had held only the threat of some counter-revolutionary action, he began to act on these threats. As appears inevitably to be the case with subterfuge, there is some confusion in

42. Dumouriez, IV, 106.

43. Ibid., 106-107. The "insignificant" letter was actually a note which requested the Convention to withhold judgement on his March 12 letter until he had an opportunity to explain himself fully. Archives Parlementaires, LX, 509. Oddly enough, this reference to the March 12 letter did not invite any comment from deputies who, presumably, had not seen the letter; and was regarded by Prudhomme, after he had read the March 12 letter, as an indication that Dumouriez now realized his remarks to have been ill-advised. Révolutions de Paris, XVI, No. 194 (March 23-30, 1793), 20-21.

44. Danton claimed at the Jacobins on March 31 that he could not have arrested Dumouriez in the midst of the general's army. Jacobins, V, 117.

accounts of "who knew what and when". By Dumouriez's account only four individuals, whom he did not name, knew of his plans prior to March 27th.⁴⁵ Chuquet, without revealing his sources, claimed that Miranda had at least a strong suspicion of Dumouriez's intentions prior to March 21st and that Chartres knew of Dumouriez's plans by the 25th.⁴⁶ Louis-Philippe admitted in his memoirs that Dumouriez had spoken to him at length about his plans on March 27th.⁴⁷ Danton, for his part, stated cryptically at the Jacobins on March 31st that he had realized after meeting with Dumouriez on the 10th that "il n'y a plus rien à espérer de Dumouriez".⁴⁸

Dumouriez's plan, as we saw in the Introduction, has been the subject of some controversy. The general

⁴⁵. Dumouriez, IV, 14. By his account he told Colonel Mack on the 27th that he intended to march on Paris. Ibid., 121. Miranda stated, and Dumouriez's editors accepted this, that three of the four were Danton, Delacroix, and Westermann. Ibid., 14, n. 1.

⁴⁶. Chuquet, pp. 181, 185.

⁴⁷. Louis-Philippe, p. 390.

⁴⁸. Jacobins, V, 113. Mathiez and Hampson viewed Danton's role from March 20-30 as a suspicious one, with a large question mark on whether he had known of Dumouriez's plans. Both historians concluded that Danton was awaiting events before speaking on the subject so as to ensure his place with the victorious party. Hampson, p. 106; Mathiez, Danton et la Paix, p. 136.

claimed that his intention had been to come to a temporary agreement with the Austrians in Belgium; march his army to Paris; overthrow the Convention; close the Jacobin Club; place Louis' son on the throne; and make peace with the allies.⁴⁹ The Orleanist debate will not be investigated here for reasons given earlier,⁵⁰ and Dumouriez's stated plan will be used as the basis for most of the remaining discussion.⁵¹

Talks with the Austrians, the first phase of the plan, began soon after the total collapse of the French forces during a small battle at Louvain on March 21st. With the knowledge of his état-major,⁵² Dumouriez met with the Prince of Coburg's representative, Colonel Mack, on

49. Dumouriez, IV, 12-14, 121-122; Louis-Philippe, pp. 390-395. Louis-Philippe claimed that Dumouriez had told him that he had been in contact with the Baron de Breteuil, Louis' former representative to the foreign Powers, since Louis' execution; and that de Breteuil had agreed to preside over a Council of Regency, which was to act in the king's name during his minority. Ibid., 391, n. 2.

50. See page 13.

51. The principal aspects of this plan, the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy and the Constitution of 1791, remained unchanged, as we shall see, through March and much of April.

52. Chuquet and Sorel included Chartres in the état-major, but Louis-Philippe stated that he had learned of the Austrian discussions after the fact. Chuquet, p. 185; Sorel, III, 354; Louis-Philippe, p. 395.

March 25.⁵³ At this meeting Dumouriez divulged his intentions and requested a secret armistice with the Austrians. Mack said he would agree to the armistice, provided the French evacuated Belgium and Holland, and he suggested that, to aid Dumouriez, the Austrians might occupy a number of French fortresses. Dumouriez refused this offer, but agreed to the evacuation of Belgium and Holland.⁵⁴ With Mack's verbal assurance of an armistice, Dumouriez's military coup could commence.

For whatever reason, it did not.⁵⁵ There began, instead, a curious series of meetings with three comparatively unknown Jacobins, who had gained an introduction to Dumouriez through a letter from Le Brun.⁵⁶ Dubuisson, Proly and Pereyre, described by Dumouriez as an "homme de lettres obscur",

53. Dumouriez erroneously, in view of note 52, placed this meeting on the 27th. Dumouriez, IV, 121.

54. Chuquet, pp. 185-186; Holland Rose, pp. 176-177 (citing Mack's memoirs); Dumouriez, IV, 121-122. Dumouriez's account claimed he had promised the fortress of Condé at this meeting, while Chuquet's narrative said this promise took place on April 4. Sorel and Chuquet both argued that Coburg was delighted at the meeting's developments as his army was a good deal weaker than Dumouriez had imagined. Sorel, III, 353-354; Chuquet, p. 186.

55. This statement will be investigated later in this thesis. See page 120.

56. Dumouriez, IV, 125.

"petit intrigant", and "jacobin très-emporé"⁵⁷ respectively, met with the general on at least three occasions between March 26 and 27. Over the course of these meetings, Dumouriez was exceedingly critical of the Convention, the Jacobins and the volunteers, while predicting that the republic would be short-lived.⁵⁸ According to the three Jacobins, Dumouriez threatened a march on Paris if there was a repeat of the September massacres and he scoffed at their warnings that he was running the risk of arrest: while he was surrounded by his soldiers, he allegedly boasted, no decree would be enforceable.⁵⁹ Although Dumouriez's version of these meetings argued that the Jacobins had appeared to enlist his support for a Jacobin purge of the Convention, and that this was the basis for the talks,⁶⁰ it was the Jacobins' interpretation of the meetings

57. Dumouriez, IV, 125-126. Given these descriptions, it is perplexing that he should have devoted so much time to them.

58. Ibid., 126-128; "Procès-verbal des conférences qui ont eu lieu entre Dumouriez, Dubuisson, Presly et Ferrara", reprinted in Révolutions de Paris, XVI, No. 195 (March 30-April 6, 1793), 52-56.

59. Cited from the "procès-verbal", noted above, page 56.

60. Dumouriez, IV, 126. The Jacobins' account stated that Dubuisson had led Dumouriez to believe that they would return to Paris to start an uprising, but that this was done to prevent their arrest by the general.

that was about to be made public.⁶¹

Having all but told the three Jacobins of his plans, and having concluded an armistice with Mack, it behooved Dumouriez to act quickly. Yet the order of the day for Dumouriez was further procrastination. In accounting for this untypical behaviour of a previously aggressive individual, one need only read Dumouriez's account of his activities during late March and early April.⁶² It will be found that, despite the repeated claims he made in the years 1794-1822 that he had intended to launch an insurrection since September 1792,⁶³ Dumouriez was totally unprepared for the event. The army, it was true, was in a

61. It is the writer's belief that these meetings, the presence of Proly and Pereyra, and the suggestion of an intended Jacobin insurrection, were responsible for a short-lived re-interpretation of March 9-10. This interpretation, (which may be found in J.M. Thompson, The French Revolution, pp. 384-385; and P. Gaxotte, The French Revolution (New York, 1943), pp. 252-253.), considered the uprising to be a probable prelude to, and excuse for, Dumouriez's march on Paris. As supporting evidence both historians remarked on the high profile Danton had adopted; the implication of Proly, Pereyra and Desfieux, who met with Dumouriez in January, in the uprising; and the fact that Dumouriez's criticisms of the Convention had begun almost simultaneously. While these coincidental events are intriguing, one would have to concur with Hampson's objection "that there is no evidence that Dumouriez was plotting-yet". Hampson, p. 103.

62. This particular section of his memoirs was written in February, 1794. Any subsequent additions or revisions were noted by his editors.

63. See note 80, Chapter III.

wretched state,⁶⁴ but both Dumouriez and Chartres were of the opinion that most of the regulars and some of the volunteers would march on the Convention.⁶⁵ However, if the insurrection were to succeed, Dumouriez would need the support of one or more of Condé, Valenciennes or Lille. Without this support, Dumouriez's army would be bereft of a supply base.

It is precisely in Dumouriez's account of his attempts to win the support of these cities that his unpreparedness is exposed. Beyond his état-major he had made no effort to learn the political sympathies of the military and municipal officials of the cities;⁶⁶ and, in the case of the departmental officials of the Nord, Pas de Calais and

64. "The army had become an amorphous mass where all the units were mixed up and wherein it had indeed become impossible to exercise any command. It had to be seen to be believed..." Louis-Philippe, p. 390.

65. Ibid., 409; Dumouriez, IV, 163.

66. For example; Dumouriez confided in the commander of Brussels, Goguet, (Dumouriez, IV, 113) who promptly informed Delacroix at Lille of the conversation (Chuquet, p. 190); an individual named Lescuyer was ordered to Valenciennes to arrest the Convention's deputies present, Bellegarde, Cochon and Leguino, and he (unwittingly?) informed the commander of Valenciennes, Ferrand, who told the deputies (Dumouriez, IV, 145; Chuquet, p. 206); and at Lille, Dumouriez's representative, Miaczynski, had been instructed to work in concert with Duval, who refused to assist, and after misplacing a second confidence, Miaczynski was arrested. (Dumouriez, IV, 146; Chuquet, p. 207.)

Aisne, Dumouriez had simply assumed they would be sympathetic.⁶⁷ Moreover, he had made an equally false assumption that the vast majority of military officers would support the Convention's overthrow. This assumption cost the general hundreds of potentially supportive soldiers who were marched off by republican officers.⁶⁸ While Dumouriez was floundering in this disorganization, time was slipping by.

This gradual disintegration of Dumouriez's plans was not known in Paris, where anxieties were increasing daily. As early as March 13, Pétion, a member of the Committee of General Defence, had written to his friend Miranda for information:

I believe there is treason in our armies and that this treason is linked with a large plot against the republic... Tell me frankly what you think of the situation. Reserve nothing, I need information for the public good.⁶⁹

The response was not encouraging for, after criticising Dumouriez's generalship at Neerwinden, Miranda concluded that "there are many other very important facts which I would be pleased to communicate to you, and which I am unable to write."⁷⁰

67. Dumouriez, IV, 130.

68. Ibid., 166.

69. Quoted in Brace, p. 504.

70. Ibid., 504.

Pétion did not have long to wait for this information. It was announced in the Convention on March 24 that, on the basis of a preliminary investigation of the battle of Neerwinden, the deputies on mission, Danton and Delacroix, had arrested Miranda and he was en route for Paris.⁷¹ Miranda arrived on the 25th and told Pétion that Dumouriez had proposed a march on Paris.⁷²

Meanwhile the denunciations of Dumouriez at the Jacobins on March 17⁷³ had led to the preparation of a circular addressed to the affiliated societies.⁷⁴ This circular traced Dumouriez's career from the Patriot Ministry to March, 1793, with a view to establishing his connection with Brissot. While stating that Dumouriez had broken with the Brissotins over his secret expenses fund, it asserted that relations had resumed in the fall, largely as a result of their common determination to oust Pache from office.⁷⁵ With the exception of Dumouriez's defence of d'Espagnac "et autres agioteurs", and the invasion of Holland, both of

71. Archives Parlementaires, LX, 510.

72. Brace, p. 504.

73. See note 32.

74. "Circulaire de la Société des Amis de la Liberté et de l'Egalité, seante aux ci-devant Jacobins--Saint-Honoré à Paris, du 26 mars 1793, l'an II^e de la République Française", reprinted in Jacobins, V, 102-107.

75. Ibid., 103.

which were motivated by self-interest, Dumouriez had acted in the interests of the Brissotins.⁷⁶ Moreover, the Brissotins had employed Dumouriez, a general "sans principes moraux, ne connaissant de dieux que l'ambition, l'or et la débauche", to represent them in negotiations with the King of Prussia, the Emperor of Austria and the Stadtholder.⁷⁷ The Brissotins, the circular continued, were the new members of the Austrian/Prussian/English Committee and they had instructed Dumouriez to abandon Holland and Belgium in return for peace. This instruction was now being carried out.⁷⁸ "Brissot est le La Fayette civil, renforcé par les trois girondins. Dumouriez est le La Fayette militaire", and, concluded the circular, all five were traitors.⁷⁹

All of which was roughly the same argument Marat had been making since late October, 1792. Following his curious defence of Dumouriez on March 12,⁸⁰ Marat returned to form on the 19th, accusing Dumouriez and "a few" of the leading "hommes d'état" of plotting a dictatorship

76. Ibid., 104.

77. Ibid., 106.

78. Ibid., 106.

79. Ibid., 106-107.

80. See page 110.

attempt in Belgium and Holland.⁸¹ The next day, Marat re-claimed his argument of October, 1792: "on sait que Dumouriez est une créature de la faction Brissotin, qui l'appela au ministère, avec Clavière et Roland, pour mieux tromper la nation, sous leur faux masque de patriotisme et leur titre de jacobins".⁸² Dumouriez's treasonous activities in Belgium, claimed Marat on the 22nd, were proved in documents being withheld by the Committee of General Defence because they comprised "la clique des hommes d'état".⁸³

The Committee of General Defence, it will be recalled, had discussed Dumouriez's March 12 letter and it had dispatched Danton and Delacroix to Belgium to obtain a retraction.⁸⁴ Once again mystery must be said to have entered the scene for Danton, who had met Dumouriez on the night of March 20-21, did not appear at the Committee until the 26th.⁸⁵ At this meeting, Beaumontville reported that

81. Journal, XVII, No. 147 (March 19, 1793), p. 372. The title of Marat's paper had been changed on March 14 (No. 144) to Le Publiciste de la République française, and would be changed again on March 25 (No. 151) to Observations à mes commettans, before returning to Le Publiciste on April 1st (No. 157). For clarity and convenience, Journal will continue to be used in the footnotes.

82. Ibid., No. 148 (March 20, 1793), pp. 379-380.

83. Ibid., No. 150 (March 22, 1793), pp. 395-396.

84. See page 109.

85. Hampson, p. 105. See note 48 for a discussion

Dumouriez had proposed the evacuation of Belgium⁸⁶ in his latest letter to the War Minister. Robespierre, Prieur (of the Marne) and Levasseur (of the Sarthe) immediately demanded his replacement, while Danton, Dubois-Crance and Camus, defended Dumouriez on military grounds.⁸⁷ Danton made no comment on his failed mission to Belgium.

Addressing the Convention the next day on the subject of unity, Danton announced that Dumouriez had shown him a letter from Roland, inviting the general "to join with us" in destroying the "party of Paris" and, above all, Danton.⁸⁸ This charge, which was not further explained, simply raised more questions about Danton's meeting with Dumouriez. Cambon arose and demanded that the March 12 letter be read to the Convention and he requested

of this delay. The Committee had been reconstituted on the 26th. Its membership was now as follows: Dubois-Crance, Pétion, Danton, Gensonné, Sieyès, Guitton-Morveau, Robespierre, Barbaroux, Ribes, Vergniaud, Fabre d'Eglantine, Buzot, Delmas, Guadet, Condorcet, Bréard, Prieur (of the Marne), Camus, Duhem, Barère, Jean de Brie, Isnard, Lasource, Quinette, and Cambacères. Revolutions de Paris, XVI, No. 194 (March 23-30, 1793), pp. 37-38.

86. A report from Delacroix, read to the Convention the same day, warned that unless the army received immediate and numerous reinforcements, the Convention could expect to be hearing disastrous news from Belgium. Archives Parlementaires, LX, 561.

87. Chuquet, p. 192.

88. Archives Parlementaires, LX, 604. Roland denied Danton's charge the following day. Ibid., 633.

a full report on the current status of the December 15 decree. Robespierre seconded these remarks.⁸⁹ Buzot then adopted a more direct route by calling on Danton to give his report; and Birotteau, a questionable Brissotin supporter,⁹⁰ moved that the March 12 letter be printed and discussed at a later date.⁹¹ Robespierre countered Birotteau by stating that the issue was pressing and the letter not very long. The Convention voted the Cambon-Robespierre motion.⁹²

The Committee refused to comply with the Convention's demand and, when this refusal stretched into a second day, March 29, tempers ran short at the Convention. Charlier began the exchange of recriminations by demanding the publication of all War Ministry correspondence with French generals; and he was followed by Marat, who demanded Danton's report.⁹³ When Buzot reported for the Committee that it expected to have good news from Belgium shortly, Thirion shouted out: "Where are the victories?"⁹⁴ Buzot hotly responded by asking a rhetorical question "Who's responsible for this mess? You!";

89. Ibid., 605.

90. Birotteau was among the twenty-nine deputies arrested June 2, 1793.

91. Archives Parlementaires, LX, 605.

92. Ibid., 605-606.

93. Ibid., 692, 694.

94. Ibid., 695.

to which unnamed deputies hurled back: "Who named the generals?".⁹⁵

Buzot's optimism was short-lived for, the same day, Burnonville appeared at the Committee meeting to read a letter from Dumouriez. This letter, dated the 28th, painted the bleakest picture of the military situation in Belgium thus far received by the Committee; and the letter dismissed the volunteer reinforcements as nothing more than a collection of "old men, children and vagabonds", who simply added to the chaos.⁹⁶ Dumouriez's letter was followed by the reading of the three Jacobins' account of their meetings with Dumouriez on the 26th and 27th. Their account,⁹⁷ which made the March 12 letter pale by comparison, caused the Committee to take action: it would recommend Dumouriez's arrest.⁹⁸ However, neither the March 12 letter nor that of the 28th would be made public.⁹⁹

95. Ibid., 695.

96. "Lettre du général Dumouriez à Burnonville, ministre de la guerre, du 28 mars 1793", reprinted in Révolutions de Paris, XVI, No. 195 (March 30-April 6, 1793), pp. 49-50.

97. See page 119.

98. Chuquet, p. 194.

99. The letters were not read to the Convention until April 1st, by which time the March 12 letter had already appeared in a number of Parisian newspapers, among them

Camus duly appeared at the Convention on the 30th and moved on behalf of the Committee that Dumouriez be arrested.¹⁰⁰ This was voted. Mention of Dumouriez once again raised the question of Danton's report, and he appeared at the tribune to give a blustering speech that said nothing of his meeting with the general.¹⁰¹ Lasource then stated that Danton should not, in fact, give a report until Dumouriez had arrived and could respond to Danton's charges.¹⁰² Danton's silence could not be politically tenable for much longer.

The old Cordelier recognized this fact at the Jacobins on March 31. Here he was once again confronted with Marat's shrill demands for a report; and he was faced with the potentially embarrassing presence of Dubuission, who was awaiting an opportunity to give his account of the meetings with Dumouriez.¹⁰³ Danton seized the initiative and began his speech to the members by stating that, as Marat knew, he had already made a report to the Committee, but that he would

le Moniteur (No. 84, March 25, 1793) and Révolutions de Paris (No. 194, March 23-30, 1793). Chuquet, p. 191.

100. Archives Parlementaires, LX, 707.

101. Ibid., 717-718.

102. Ibid., 718-719.

103. Jacobins, V, 113.

be happy to expand upon his views.¹⁰⁴ Dumouriez, said Danton, had come to consider himself after Jemappes as being superior to a Convention ruled by "blood drinkers and scoundrels", an impression the general had received as a result of his correspondence with members of "the party of Roland and Brissot".¹⁰⁵ However, by the time he and Delacroix had met Dumouriez, the general was an exhausted man, who could do no more than denounce the Convention and the people from the secure midst of his army.¹⁰⁶ As a result, concluded Danton, a report was made to the Committee and the Committee had ordered Dumouriez's arrest.¹⁰⁷ Ten days after the event, Danton had finally spoken.

It is clear, however, that in a short period of time, March 12-26, the Jacobins had reinterpreted their position on Dumouriez. Moreover this reinterpretation, and it now appeared that Danton was subscribing to it, envisaged Dumouriez as a factional issue, with the Jacobins defending the Republic and the Revolution against the forces of counter-revolution. Conversely, and the new interpretation of

104. Ibid., 113. He had not, of course, made a report to the Committee.

105. Ibid., 115.

106. Ibid., 116.

107. Ibid., 117.

Dumouriez was predicated on the existence of a converse, it is clear that the Brissotins and some of their supporters were slowly accepting the fact that the Republic's leading general was about to commit a counter-revolutionary act. As both the Jacobins and the Brissotins approached the month of April, and the climax of Dumouriez's plot, they appeared to be in agreement on one question: Dumouriez would have to be arrested and tried. It is not clear, however, whether the Brissotins had taken a stand beyond this.

The Brissotin position was slightly clarified by Lasource at the April 1st session of the Convention. Dumouriez was the leading topic of the day. Marat began the lengthy discussion by charging the "Brissotin" Committee of General Defence with having arrested Dubuisson, Prolly and Pereyra; with harbouring "proofs" of Dumouriez's treason; and he accused Dumouriez of being a "creature" of the Committee and the "hommes d'état".¹⁰⁸ Lasource and Guyton-Morveau responded on behalf of the Committee, stating that the three Jacobins had not been "arrested" as such, but were in safe-keeping to prevent assassination attempts.¹⁰⁹

Cambacères then announced to the Convention that the Committee was releasing the letters of March 12 and 28,

108. Archives Parlementaires, LXI, 38-39.

109. Ibid., 39. The Jacobins were released a few days later, and guillotined in 1794 as traitors.

respectively, and he informed the deputies that the letters had been withheld out of "prudence", until Dumouriez's intentions had become known. The procès-verbal of Dubuisson, Proly and Pereyra, he said, had removed any doubt from the minds of the Committee members.¹¹⁰ Debate on the letters immediately centered on the possibility of an Orleanist plot, but Boyer-Fonfrède altered this focus by moving that the debate be adjourned until Dumouriez had appeared at the bar of the Convention.¹¹¹ Robespierre countered that the "order of the day" was to address the crisis and this prompted Penières and Bréard to account further for the Committee's delay in publicising Dumouriez's March 12 letter.¹¹²

These speeches brought Danton's activities, boasts and long silences, to the public view and he was called to account. Danton's speech was poor, not to the point, and anything but an explanation of his activities,¹¹³ and this prompted Lasource to make a devastating speech in reply. Addressing Danton's speech sentence by sentence, Lasource

110. Ibid., 39, 46. Camus said that the Committee had been afraid of the effect the letters might have had on Paris and that many of the deputies had already seen the letters. Rapports, pp. 9-10.

111. Ibid., 48.

112. Ibid., 48-49. Their account was consulted for the narrative of the Committee's meetings and, as no new information could be brought to light by recounting their speeches, we shall dispense with a needless repetition in the text.

113. Ibid., 49-51.

exposed the nullity of Danton's arguments and he mentioned that Robespierre had been far more alert in demanding Dumouriez's arrest than Danton had been in urging restraint.¹¹⁴ Lasource concluded that Danton's activities had been very suspicious and he wondered aloud whether Danton might have been, and was, part of Dumouriez's conspiracy.¹¹⁵ Birotteau added a thoroughly gratuitous accusation that Fabre d'Eglantine, an associate of Danton's, had said at the Committee that France needed a monarch.¹¹⁶

The Mountain and the crowd in the public galleries vociferously urged a submissive Danton to defend himself.¹¹⁷ Prompted along by Marat, Danton made a thunderous speech, designed to identify himself with the Mountain and the people, and to identify the Brissotins with Dumouriez and counter-revolution. Dumouriez was "a girondin general", Danton charged, and cited the editorials of the Patriote française and Dumouriez's friendship with Gensonné as proof.¹¹⁸ "Yes,"

114. Ibid., 51. Robespierre's demand was made at the Committee on March 14. See page 109.

115. Ibid., 52.

116. Ibid., 52-53.

117. Ibid., 54; Hampson, p. 108.

118. Archives Parlementaires, LXI, 56-57. The question of Gensonné's friendship was in doubt at this time (see page 95). As well, Danton had asked Gensonné to go with him on his mission to obtain Dumouriez's retraction and

continued Danton, "they and they alone are the accomplices in this plot, and it is I who accuse them!".¹¹⁹ The speech built on this basis, denouncing unnamed deputies as Federalists and Royalists, and proclaiming that there could be no truce between the Mountain and "the cowards" who had tried to save Louis.¹²⁰ "I have entrenched myself", concluded Danton, "in the citadel of reason. I will sortie from it with the artillery of truth; and the rascals who have tried to accuse me will be ground to power!".¹²¹ Danton had declared war on the Brissotins.

That night at the Jacobins, Robespierre publicly attacked Dumouriez for the first time. Dumouriez's letter of March 28, said Robespierre, was an open declaration of war on the Republic, and proved that Dumouriez was a "traitor".¹²²

Gensonné, for whatever reason, had refused. H. Morse Stephens, A History of the French Revolution (2 vols., London 1897), II, 236. The Patriote française of April 1st defended Dumouriez. Cited in Brace, p. 507.

119. Archives Parlementaire, LXI, 55. Translation is from J.M. Thompson, Leaders of the French Revolution, p. 125.

120. Archives Parlementaires, LXI, 56-57.

121. Ibid., 59. Translation is from J.M. Thompson, p. 127. See note 119.

122. Jacobins, V, 118-119.

However, "Dumouriez a des complices parmi nous":

la conspiration est en France: elle est dans le ministre de la guerre..., dans le corps administratifs négligents, dans les tribunaux qui ont favorisé les émigrés; elle est dans le Directoire des postes..., elle est dans tout ceux qui veulent la ruine de Paris et de la République.¹²³

To save the Republic, he continued, it was not sufficient to change a minister or a general; the regeneration of the entire government was needed and an unshakeable resolve to prefer death to slavery was essential.¹²⁴

This resolute attitude was not matched by Dumouriez, who, as we have seen,¹²⁵ appeared unable to act decisively following his armistice with the Austrians. Apart from his efforts to gain control of a secure supply base,¹²⁶ Dumouriez had occupied himself with the writing of numerous letters, proclamations and orders; and he had decided that hostages were essential to safeguard the lives of the royal family in Paris.¹²⁷ The Convention unwittingly provided the hostages by dispatching Beaumontville and four deputies to

123. Ibid., 119-120.

124. Ibid., 120.

125. See page 120.

126. See page 121. In the interest of objectivity it should be noted that the need for a supply base was occasioned by Dumouriez's refusal to accept either supply or manpower support from the Austrians.

127. Dumouriez, IV, 147-149.

Belgium to arrest Dumouriez.¹²⁸ Meeting with Dumouriez on the night of April 1st, they were told by Dumouriez that he refused to return to Paris with them, claiming that "des tigres veulent ma tête, et je ne veux pas la donner".¹²⁹

The Convention, continued Dumouriez, "dominée par le monstre Marat, par les jacobins et par les indécentes tribunes toujours remplies de leurs émissaires", was incapable of saving him from the Revolutionary Tribunal and death.¹³⁰

Once France had a government and laws, he concluded, he would render an exact account of his conduct and motives.¹³¹

On this, the War Minister and the four deputies were arrested and delivered to the Austrians.¹³²

128. Archives Parlementaires, LX, 707. Carnot, later "the organizer of victory", was to join these emissaries en route, but their routes did not coincide.

129. Dumouriez, IV, 154. The account given by the four deputies (Camus, Quinette, Lamarque and Bancal) was consulted for this discussion. It does not differ significantly from Dumouriez's version. Rapports, pp. 26-36.

130. Dumouriez, IV, 155.

131. Ibid., 156.

132. Louis-Philippe said that he had considered this to be a blunder, but that the troops had displayed no concern for the arrests per se, only for the fact that the hostages had been delivered to the Austrians. Louis-Philippe, pp. 400, 409. Dumouriez explained his action thus: "il faut se souvenir que le général Dumouriez n'avait aucune place assurée ou il put les garder lui-même". Dumouriez, IV, 160.

By Dumouriez's account it was the arrest of the representatives that had caused him to feel that the Rubicon had been crossed.¹³³ It was now imperative that he act, and he did so by issuing three major proclamations.¹³⁴ The earliest and most coherent of these proclamations was addressed to the administrators of the northern departments of France.¹³⁵ "La tyrannie, les assassinats, les crimes," it began, "sont au comble dans Paris, l'anarchie nous dévore, et sous le nom sacré de liberté nous avons le plus vil esclavage".¹³⁶ The Convention had responded to the increasing national dangers with cruelty, tyranny and blindness, it charged, and, on being told these truths in Dumouriez's March 12 letter, Marat and Robespierre had demanded the general's head. As a result,

je ne tarderai pas à marcher sur Paris pour faire cesser la sanglante anarchie qui y regne. J'ai trop bien défendu la liberté

133. Dumouriez, IV, 149.

134. Dumouriez's writings during late March and early April must have occupied a good deal of his time for they were voluminous. Taken together they are a testament to the confusion, lack of direction, and virtual non-existence of an intelligence system that must have prevailed. In view of the overwhelming mass of material, the writer has chosen the three most important documents only.

135. "Lettre du général Dumouriez, aux administrateurs des départements du nord", reprinted in Révolutions de Paris, XVI, No. 195 (March 30-April 6, 1793), p. 69

136. Ibid., 69.

jusqu'a present pour abandonner cette cause.¹³⁷

The rejection of the Constitution of 1791, the address continued, marked the end of stable government and the commencement of crime and misfortune: its re-adoption would end the internal and external wars, and begin an era of peace, tranquility and happiness. Once the nation had been saved, it concluded, Dumouriez would resign all public office.¹³⁸

Dumouriez made a brief and uninspired address to the army on April 2nd.¹³⁹ A third of this proclamation was devoted to an explanation of the arrests of the Convention's representatives before it addressed its purpose:

il est temps que l'armée émette son voeu, purge la France des assassins et des agioteurs, et rendre à notre malheureuse patrie, le repos qu'elle a perdu par les crimes de ses representans. Il est temps de reprendre une constitution que nous avons juré trois ans de suite, qui nous donnait la liberté, et qui peut seule nous garantir de la licence et de l'anarchie dans laquelle on nous a plongés.¹⁴⁰

Unlike the proclamation to the administrators, it did not promise a swift march.

137. Ibid., 69.

138. Ibid., 69.

139. "Le général Dumouriez à l'armée française. Aux bains de Saint-Amand, le premier avril à onze du soir", reprinted in Ibid., 70.

140. Ibid., 70.

The next day, April 3rd, Dumouriez issued his proclamation to the nation,¹⁴¹ which was not only exceedingly lengthy, but it was as much a public response to various accusations as a rallying call: Dumouriez as Foreign Affairs Minister had not stolen from the secret expenses fund; Dumouriez had saved the nation from the Prussian invasion, despite Marat's charges to the contrary; Dumouriez had not aspired to a dictatorship after Jemappes; Dumouriez had not caused the military disasters in Belgium; and, finally, Dumouriez had desired peace, not war, with England and Holland.¹⁴² Since Neerwinden "Les Marat, les Robespierre et la secte criminelle des jacobins de Paris" had attacked all generals, Dumouriez above all, to gain their arrest and imprisonment for another massacre.¹⁴³

With his public reputation avenged, Dumouriez launched his verbal assault on the Convention:

si le despotisme d'un seul est dangereux pour la liberté, combien plus est odieux celui de sept cents hommes, dont beaucoup sont sans principes, sans moeurs, et ne sont parvenus à cette supériorité que par des cabales ou crimes!¹⁴⁴

141. "Declaration du général Dumouriez a la nation française", reprinted in Dumouriez, IV, 287-294.

142. Ibid., 288-289.

143. Ibid., 290.

144. Ibid., 290.

However, Dumouriez was not clear in the proclamation whether all the deputies were reprehensible or only a few. "Quatre ou cinq cents gémissaient et décrétaient sous le glaive des satellites des Marat et des Robespierre", the proclamation read in one paragraph, only to be followed in the next with an accusation that "ces sept cents individus" were destroying the nation.¹⁴⁵

This confusion, accentuated here, did not cloud the intention of the proclamation, which was to promote the Constitution of 1791, "l'oeuvre d'un peuple libre", and to demonstrate the need for military intervention.¹⁴⁶ If the Constitution were restored, promised the address, internal fighting would cease, external wars would end, and France would have peace and happiness again.¹⁴⁷ To accomplish this, the proclamation implicitly left no doubt that the Convention would have to be overthrown.

Unfortunately for Dumouriez, the issue of these proclamations had also marked the passage of time, and his time had passed. The deputies at Lille¹⁴⁸ had been acting vigorously to rally that city and the surrounding area to

145. Ibid., 291-292.

146. Ibid., 293.

147. Ibid., 293-294.

148. Delacroix, Gossuin, Merlin (of Douai) and Robert.

the defence of the Republic, and the same was occurring at Valenciennes.¹⁴⁹ News of the Convention's decree of accusation of March 30 was also having an effect for, despite the turbulence of its first seven months, the Convention still commanded respect.¹⁵⁰ Worst of all, however, was that Dumouriez had made no effort to separate the more radical volunteers from the regulars. The general who had so often criticized the volunteers,¹⁵¹ and who said in later years that "un seul jacobin perdait un bataillon par ses notions incendiaires",¹⁵² had not only left the volunteers with the main army, but had counted on their support.¹⁵³ This was totally unrealistic and peculiarly out of character.

The result of his procrastination, since March 25, was that his soldiers had far too long to contemplate the consequences of a failed march. Thus, by April 3rd Dumouriez knew his army was wavering and, on the 4th, he was actually fired upon by three battalions of volunteers.¹⁵⁴ On the night of the 4th, Dumouriez met again with Mack and he agreed to the delivery of Condé to the Austrians. As

149. Louis Philippe, p. 409. The deputies were Leguino, Cochen and Bellegarde.

150. Sydenham, The French Revolution, p. 145.

151. See page 65.

152. Dumouriez, III, 290.

153. Ibid., 164; Louis-Philippe, p. 409.

154. Dumouriez, IV, 164.

well, Austrian troops and cavalry were to march with Dumouriez's army to the frontier.¹⁵⁵ The next morning Dumouriez returned to his camp with an escort of fifty Imperial dragoons, where he learned that the artillery battalions had joined the Republican forces at Valenciennes. This fact, and the unfavourable attitude his soldiers adopted at the sight of their general's Austrian escort, put paid to any hope he might have had of rallying his army.¹⁵⁶ Recognizing this, Dumouriez returned to the Austrian camp. The "insurrection" was over.

It is easy to see, in retrospect, the small danger that this insurrection had posed for the Republic. In Paris at that time, however, the danger was seen as very great and this had caused the Convention to enact legislation to deal effectively with the crisis.¹⁵⁷ On March 10 the Revolutionary Tribunal had been created; on the 21st Committees of Revolutionary Surveillance had been established; on the 28th

155. Ibid., 172.

156. Ibid., 173-174. Louis-Philippe made no mention of the Austrian escort, but said that Dumouriez's gallop to the Austrian lines the day before, instead of to his headquarters, had angered the soldiers. Louis-Philippe, p. 413.

157. There were other crises facing the Convention, including a revolt in Brittany and the Vendée, and economic problems. See, for a discussion of these crises, A. Soboul, The French Revolution 1787-1799 (trans. A. Forrest and C. Jones (New York, 1974), pp. 291-295, 299-303.

émigrés had been declared hors de la loi for life and their property had been confiscated; and on April 5-6 the Committee of Public Safety was created to replace the Committee of General Defence. This legislative momentum had largely been the result of Jacobin proposals, tenaciously argued and collectively defended.¹⁵⁸ It is not surprising that, with this clear and reasonably unified vision of how to counter the crisis, the Jacobins also had a clear interpretation of the crisis itself. The Brissotins and their supporters, who after all were unified only by Jacobin definition, had not responded to Dumouriez's insurrection with alacrity, decision or clarity. The delays of the Committee and the implicit and, at times, explicit benefit of the doubt given Dumouriez by the Brissotins, exposed them to charges they could neither answer nor escape.

It would belabour a point to recount speech by speech, publication by publication, the further evolution of the Jacobin interpretation. The circular of March 26¹⁵⁹ was, with minor variations, the Jacobin statement on the Dumouriez-Brissotin association through to May 31st.¹⁶⁰

158. Ibid., 303-305.

159. See page 123.

160. The more important of these later statements are: Robespierre's speech at the Convention (Archives Parlementaires, LXI, 283) and at the Jacobins (Jacobins, V.

It would also belabour a point to return to our evidence, notably the meetings of the Committee and Dumouriez's proclamations, to argue that the Brissotins had not consciously supported Dumouriez's plans, nor had the general indicated that the Brissotins had ever been expected to support those plans. Dumouriez's plans were clear and they did not include the Brissotins.

However, Marat and Robespierre never tired in their repetition of a quotation from one of Dumouriez's several letters to Buononville,¹⁶¹ that cannot be ignored in this chapter. On March 29th Dumouriez wrote the following:

dites au comité de sûreté générale que, revenu

123) on April 3rd; his April 10th "Dixième lettre à ses commettans", (reprinted in M. Robespierre, Oeuvres complètes (Paris, 1953), IX, 378-398); his speeches of April 17th and 18th at the Jacobins (Ibid., 445, 456) as well as those of May 24th and 26th (Ibid., 521-523, 525); and the speeches he gave at the Convention on May 28th and 31st (Ibid., 532, 541). The speech of May 31st, spurred by Vergniaud's abrupt "concluez donc", is the height of the state of the art: "Oui, je vais conclure, et contre vous,...., contre vous qui avez conspiré avec Dumouriez... Et bien! ma conclusion, c'est le décret d'accusation contre tous les complices de Dumouriez". Of importance as well are Marat's Journal of April 2, 3, 4, 10 and 11 (Journal, XVIII, Numbers 158, 159, 160, 165, 166); and Camille Desmoulins' Histoire des Brissotins (Paris, 1794), which was read at the Jacobins on May 17.

161. It is peculiar that Dumouriez should have written on a daily basis to Buononville, all but divulging his intentions, when Buononville was simply turning the letters over to the Committee or the Convention.

sur les frontières de la France, je me séparerai en deux parties pour empêcher, d'une part, l'envahissement des étrangers' et, de l'autre, pour rendre à la partie saine et opprimée de l'Assemblée la force et l'autorité dont la privation les jette dans l'avilissement, même aux yeux des départemens.¹⁶²

This was, as mentioned, seized upon by Marat and Robespierre as further proof of the Dumouriez-Brissotin association.

It was, however, as we have seen in Dumouriez's words and actions throughout this chapter, at variance with the overwhelming evidence denying this association. As such, it can only be explained in terms of the date it was written and to whom it was written. Perhaps, too, Dumouriez had considered it worth the effort to canvas for support among deputies that might, in his mind, have become disaffected with the Convention. What is certain, however, is that this statement of Dumouriez's was exploited to an unreasonable extent to further an interpretation that did not, and does not, correspond with the evidence.

162. Quoted from Rapports, p. 15, n. 1.

CONCLUSION

By agreeing to the delivery of French fortresses to the Austrians, Dumouriez had committed treason. Moreover, he had placed himself in a category that was far more reprehensible than that of either Lafayette or the émigrés, as Lafayette could at least claim to have abandoned the Revolution on principle, while the émigrés could claim never to have accepted it. Dumouriez, on the other hand, had worked for Louis XVI, had accepted his overthrow on August 10, had accepted the Republic, and he had won military victories for the Republic. As a result, his professed royalism in spring, 1793, appears not only poorly timed (Louis had been dead for over two months) but insincere.

This sudden concern for principle lends itself to the espousal of cynical conclusions on Dumouriez's character, to say nothing of his career. This cynicism is abetted by Dumouriez's repeated assertions in his memoirs that he had been awaiting, since August 10, an opportune moment to restore the Bourbon monarchy. If Valmy and Jemappes had not brought this opportunity, how could Neerwinden? Yet, if this cynicism is justifiable, it is also unfair.

General Dumouriez wanted order, and when the Republic appeared unable to provide this order, in either civil or military terms, he came to consider it necessary to intervene for personal as well as altruistic reasons. His ambition and talents were being thwarted by the chaos in

Belgium and in the army, and he considered the Convention incapable of providing security, be it economic or political, for France. The latter opinion was probably formed in January, while the former does not appear to have been realized until March. Once both opinions had been formed, it does not seem peculiar, or blindly opportunist, that Dumouriez would desire a return to the days of the Constitution of 1791 that had provided, to his mind, greater stability and order.

Implied here is that Dumouriez was apolitical. There is no evidence to support a view that he held strong monarchist or republican opinions or, for that matter, that he ever thought much about the Revolution. Why it had begun, what it had accomplished, and where it was headed, were questions Dumouriez left to deputies and philosophers. He was, arguably, a soldier first. His foreign policy views were not new or innovative and, as a Minister, he did not inspire the Council with his Revolutionary goals and visions, for he had none.

Consequently, his association with the Brissotins was based on circumstance, not on common political conviction. When Dumouriez aspired to public office in spring, 1792, the Brissotins were among the leading deputies of the Legislative Assembly and, as such, were useful, if not wholly necessary, to his aspirations. Once in office, he quickly demonstrated

that he had very little in common with them, and that he did not share their political views. As a follower of events, however, Dumouriez found that he could accept the fall of the monarchy and the declaration of the Republic, for it did not significantly alter his life, nor, apparently, that of France's. The failure of Lafayette's coup no doubt contributed greatly to this acceptance. These events did, nonetheless, renew his association with the Brissotins as they were now the leading deputies in a governmental structure that offered them far more power than the previous one.

Having been brought together by circumstance, circumstance could not fail to drive them apart. In the absence of a solid basis, the association collapsed with the December 15 decree. Its short life, however, doomed both sides to the continuation of the appearance of an association. Dumouriez owed his appointment as Commander-in-Chief to the support of the Brissotins, and his victories made him irreplaceable. Thus, if Dumouriez wanted to remain the Commander, he needed Brissotin support; if the Brissotins wanted to replace him, Dumouriez would have to lose a battle.

The disasters in Belgium had two effects. First, they drove Dumouriez to adopt a desperate course; and second, the disasters were such that the Brissotins could not, in their view, seize the opportunity to dismiss Dumouriez. As

the Brissotins did not have a genuine association with Dumouriez, they did not realise the extent of his disaffection and, therefore, they adopted Danton's counsels, which brought upon themselves the charge that they were in support of Dumouriez's plot. For his part, Dumouriez had adopted his course because of the ruin, as he saw it, the Convention had brought to France and Belgium. To suggest that his plot was to restore the Brissotins, the supporters of the December 15 decree, to power is patently untenable.

We can say, then, that this inquiry has achieved its purpose: General Dumouriez was not a "Girondin" general. His "association" with the Brissotins was wholly circumstantial and, to the extent that Dumouriez's politics can be commented on, he did not share their political opinions.

This inquiry was, of course, an examination of an interpretation that is false in whole and in part. Not only has it shown that none of the evidence available supports the thesis of "association", but it has confirmed the view that the "Girondin party" itself is mythical. In practice, when one is investigating the controversial events in Paris, especially during the March-April, 1793, period, the investigation rapidly becomes one of the Jacobin Society on the one hand, and numerous individuals on the other. This fact explains the inability of the Brissotins to escape the Jacobin charges: how could a collection of individuals,

who knew little of Dumouriez's counter-revolutionary activities, and who believed in his indispensability, respond to a determined and concentrated attack? They could not.

We must conclude that the commonly accepted interpretation of Dumouriez's relationship with the "Girondins" represents too uncritical an acceptance of the interpretation bequeathed to history by the Jacobins and Montagnards in 1793.

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